

THE PINK

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65p

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Daily Echo

**EXCLUSIVE TERRY PAINE
COLUMN INSIDE**

Saints legend writes exclusively for you



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The Koeman years



In-depth coverage of Saints inside

LONG'S 'ONE OF THE BEST'



SHANE Long has earned his reputation as "one of the best strikers in the Premier League," according to Jan Vertonghen.

Saints star Long is set to lead the line for the Republic of Ireland as they come up against Tottenham centre half Vertonghen's Belgium side at Euro 2016 today.

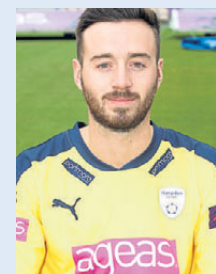
Run around

Long gave Vertonghen and his former Saints teammate Toby Alderweireld the run around as Saints won 2-1 at White Hart Lane in the penultimate game of the season. *Turn to page 3*

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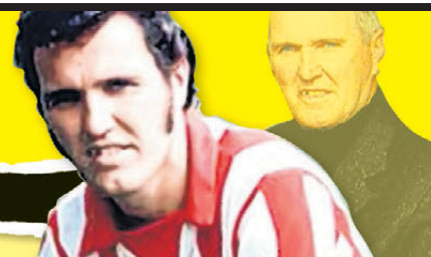


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Paine's World

The Saints legend's **EXCLUSIVE** column on all things football



Ireland face crunch if Walters is ruled out

IT seems increasingly likely that Jonathan Walters will be ruled out of the rest of Euro 2016, representing a heavy blow to Irish hopes of progress.

Not only was Walters Ireland's best performer throughout the qualification campaign, but he's also become a critical element in the formation that allows Wes Hoolahan play, thereby allowing the Irish to field their best creative talent.

Hoolahan's excellence on Monday showed clearly the benefits of the shape in terms of ensuring his involvement.

Backed by Whelan at the base, and Hendrick and McCarthy left and right, the former Shelbourne man has a platform to drift, float and create.

The narrow nature of the midfield shape also allows Ireland to try and get the best out of the attacking instincts of Seamus Coleman and Robbie Brady. Both had their moments against the Swedes, most notably the Donegal man's brilliant run and pull back for the opener.

Inherent weakness

However, as the Swedes upped the tempo in their search for a way back into the game on Monday, an inherent weakness in that formation – one often negated by Walters – was exposed with alarming regularity by Martin Olsson who consistently found space to drive down Sweden's right flank.

With McCarthy apparently struggling with his positioning – uncertain of whether to go and help the increasingly harassed Coleman or stay to avoid the Swedes making hay in the middle – Ireland struggled to stem the tide.

McCarthy rightly took a lot of flak for his performance, but while the system may bring the best from Hoolahan, it doesn't suit the Everton midfielder. McCarthy looks a lot more comfortable as one of the midfield two in a 4-4-2 or a 4-2-3-1, as we most often see him at his club.

Bewildered

Against the Swedes, he looked bewildered at times, unsure of how to help the harassed Coleman, indecisive on and off the ball. And while he must take the criticism on the chin



Republic of Ireland's Jonathan Walters battles for the ball with Sweden's Oscar Lewicki (left) and Kim Kallstrom.

and should be capable of much better; the constant Swedish pressure on that side of the pitch wasn't entirely down to him.

The space Olsson attacked was also a function of the often unbalanced nature of the side caused by Hoolahan's tendency to drift to the left and the fact that Walters was unable to cover the right-hand side as he has so ably done on other occasions.

The Stoke man's running power and game intelligence has allowed him to fill that gap when it appears, helping those behind him, whilst also staying in touch with Shane Long or Daryl Murphy in attack.

In Paris, Walters was clearly suffering. His lack of fitness was crucial in that period after Hoolahan's 48th minute goal when Ireland lost their grip on their game.

Had he been fit and firing, we may well have weathered the storm. And now, unfortunately, it looks as if Walters will miss the rest of the tournament.

If that proves to be the case, then his influence on the pitch, and off it by all accounts, will not only damage the Irish's best formation, but any hopes of advancing past the group stages too.

goals

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SAINTS SPOTLIGHT



We couldn't have asked for more

Why Koeman was a massive success ...

THE Daily Echo's chief sports writer ADAM LEITCH looks back at Ronald Koeman's record-breaking two seasons at Saints.

SUM UP RONALD KOEMAN'S TWO SEASONS AT ST MARY'S

In a word – successful.

Wind the clock back to when he was appointed. It seems hard to remember now but it felt like the club was on the precipice.

Mauricio Pochettino's departure had been followed by the defection of a host of big name players - Rickie Lambert, Adam Lallana, Luke Shaw, Dejan Lovren, Calum Chambers - and the squad that had taken the club through the divisions back to the Premier League was being dismantled.

There were fears it would get even worse were a new manager not appointed quickly, and even then they faced a mammoth task.

Ronald Koeman was the right man at the right time.

His ice cool persona and the gravitas he brought to the club steadied the ship.

He rebuilt the squad, having the chance to put his own stamp on things early on, and from there it was really two seasons of success.

Even a turnover of players last summer didn't stop him.

Of course, there were a few downs as well as ups.

As fantastic as the last two seasons have been, both featured a period where there was a significant downturn in form, and both of those prevented an unbelievable story such as Saints finishing in the top four from taking place.

Top job

However, given what he walked into and the resources at his disposal, he has done a top job.

To progress year upon year is a very hard thing to do.

Pochettino had Saints finish eighth, but Koeman took that on to seventh and then sixth, breaking the club's record Premier League era points tally on both occasions.

You really couldn't have asked for much more, and probably expected less.



Ronald Koeman applauds the Saints fans at the end of his last game in charge against Crystal Palace.



Ronald Koeman and Mauricio Pochettino - two men who have walked out on Saints in the last three close seasons.

We will look back in years to come as this either being the start of something really special, or as a golden era for Saints.

Either way, it is something to be cherished.

WHAT WAS HIS RECORD IN THE TRANSFER MARKET LIKE?

Koeman had a fantastic record for

Saints.

Every manager is always going to make the odd signing that doesn't work out, but you want to see many more hits than misses, and he delivered that. **Cont on page 4**

Long back to haunt Belgians

from front page

The pair may well still be haunted by the experience, given that both have praised Long and warned just how dangerous he will be when the sides meet in their Group E fixture.

Vertonghen said: "For me he is the main man for them. I find him one of the best strikers in the Premier League."

"He is very mobile, very direct, and he has a good head. Hopefully we can stop them [Ireland]."

It is a vital fixture for both teams with Belgium having lost their opening group match to Italy and with Ireland having drawn with Sweden.

Alderweireld played alongside Long at St Mary's in his single season with the club, but the striker has come on massively since the defender left and joined Tottenham.

"Shane Long is fast and strong, with the Irish system ideal for a player like him," said the 27-year-old.

"We know that Ireland will play with the long ball up Long, so we will have to arm ourselves physically. I can tell it will be difficult for us but we need to win this match."

Favourites

"We are favourites because all our players are at top clubs. It is a case of making make that count."

"I know the mistake against Italy was mine but I wasn't the only one who could have done better. There was a miscommunication, which happens sometimes."

"We cannot allow it get in the way of our objective of beating Ireland."

Jose Fonte and Cedric Soares are hoping for their first taste of action in the tournament today as Portugal take on Austria.

The Saints defensive duo were both unused subs in Portugal's disappointing



Shane Long. Kelvin

O'Neill has strength in depth

GARETH McAuley and Niall McGinn scored in a 2-0 victory over Ukraine to give Northern Ireland their first finals win since the 1982 World Cup.

Michael O'Neill's much-changed side bounced back from their disappointing loss to Poland and remain in with a shot of reaching the knockout stage at Euro 2016.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at five things we learned from the contest in Lyon.

NEVER DOUBT MICHAEL O'NEILL. Five changes? No Kyle Lafferty? What was O'Neill thinking? It turns out the Ireland boss knew exactly what he was doing. A flat back-four bookended by Aaron Hughes and Jonny Evans shut down Andriy Yarmolenko and Yevhen Konoplyanka, while the introduction of Conor Washington, Jamie Ward and Stuart Dallas gave them more drive going forward. Defeat could have eliminated the Green and White Army and O'Neill went all-in with his team selection, a bold move which proved inspired.

THERE IS STRENGTH AND DEPTH IN THIS TEAM

Five of the 14 players that featured had not played any part in Nice four days earlier. After two games, the only outfield players in the 23-man squad yet to feature at all are Lee Hodson, Luke McCullough and Will Grigg. O'Neill has decent options in every position, a luxury



Northern Ireland talisman Kyle Lafferty.

not afforded previous Northern Ireland managers.

THE LAST-16 DREAM IS STILL THERE. Ray Wilkins claimed they would return home without a point and Michael Owen predicted they would finish bottom. O'Neill's side have already exceeded their expectations ahead of a final Group C contest with Germany in Paris. Even defeat in the French capital would not definitely rule them out of a place in the knockout stages due to four third-placed teams advancing, while a famous upset over the world champions would certainly seal their progress.

KYLE LAFFERTY MAY BE ON THE BENCH AGAIN AGAINST GERMANY. The shocking omission from the starting line-up in Lyon was the exclusion of Lafferty. The talisman in qualifying, who scored on seven occasions to get his country to France, watched on as the busy Washington proved to be a pest for the Ukrainian defence with his pace and movement. O'Neill will expect Germany to dominate possession in Paris and must consider whether Washington will provide a better outlet than the man who sits second on Northern Ireland's all-time scorers list.

THE WORLD CHAMPIONS SHOULD ELICIT NO FEAR

In their previous four meetings with Germany, Northern Ireland have conceded a staggering 14 goals. They even scored four in their most recent meeting in Belfast in 2005 despite having 10 men for 75 minutes. This is a different Northern Ireland, though.

Koeman's remarkable

from page 3

What makes that record all the more remarkable is that, by the very nature of the job he inherited, he had to make an awful lot of signings over his two seasons.

How could you argue over the value for money that Pelle, Mane, Forster, Van Dijk, Bertrand, Tadic and Long have provided?

When assessing their success, you firstly have to ask whether they have done a good job, which they undoubtedly have, and what their current resale value would be, which in all those cases is considerably more than Saints paid for them.

You could point to Juanmi as being one that didn't work out, while we are still to see the best of Cedric Soares and Jordy Clasie. But even so, those two were not ludicrous investments, retain value and should have an impact going forward.

WAS HE A GOOD TACTICIAN?

He certainly wasn't afraid to change things, whether it be style or formation.

Saints were always best under his watch in their loose 4-2-3-1 formation, but he did switch to three centre halves at times when things weren't going so well and he was attempting to shore it up at the back.

In terms of style of play, it was a possession based game, building up from the back, though at times Saints could direct if they needed to.

One criticism of Koeman would be that feeling that he tended to overthink things a little at times.

Quite often you would see the team put in a good performance and see no reason to change things for the following fixture, yet Koeman would tinker.

It would often be because the opposition had, for example, a very strong attacking full back, or a particularly creative player in a certain position.

Of course, you need to be aware of that and sometimes change is necessary, particularly when you are facing one of the big clubs and their array of world class talent.

But making those kind of adjustments when you were in a winning mindset and you are playing, for example, Sunderland or similar just seemed unnecessary.

COULD HE MAKE GAME-CHANGING SUBSTITUTIONS?

It did happen, but it wasn't one of his strengths.

Koeman tended to be the kind of manager who believed the team he picked was correct, and to stick with it in the hope it would still come good.

HE COULD BE QUITE A DISCIPLINARIAN, COULDN'T HE?



Sadio Mane is just one of many impressive Ronald Koeman signings for Saints.



Fraser Forster, another one of Ronald Koeman's great signings during his time at St Mary's.

Koeman was very much what you might describe as an old school manager.

Despite his own walkout in the end, he very much preached values from what feels like a bygone era in football, which he had obviously carried forward from his playing days.

He set the tone for that early on with Morgan Schneiderlin, insisting the Frenchman wouldn't be sold despite his desperation to move to Tottenham.

He often bemoaned the tendency for players under contract to want to leave.

In terms of the day to day aspects, he was always wanting players to

behave professionally.

Of the more notable examples of people falling foul of this, Sadio Mane twice got dropped for his poor timekeeping, while Graziano Pelle's attitude in training left Koeman unimpressed enough to leave him out of the team.

On the pitch he also expected discipline. Certainly his anger to-

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ole job at St Mary's



James Ward-Prowse was the only Academy graduate to play regularly under Ronald Koeman.

wards Victor Wanyama after his red card at Norwich was both understandable and palpable.

USE OF ACADEMY PLAYERS

If there is one area of Koeman's management that could cause friction behind the scenes with the club it was over the academy.

Saints pride themselves on their academy, and want it to thrive.

There are a couple of prime motivators for that – firstly, it's a philosophy. The club have always excelled at it, it has helped them function as a business and they want to continue.

Secondly, they need it to work. They have committed vast resources to the academy infrastructure, and so they have to make it work.

Ultimately, the results are judged on one thing – are there academy players in the first team?

Under Koeman the answer was generally no.

The likes of Harrison Reed and Sam Gallagher who were on the scene under Pochettino drifted out of the picture.

Matt Targett does have a hard job to get past Ryan Bertrand but was generally only used when Saints played three centre halves, while Jake Hesketh came and went in the blink of an eye.

The only one able to really get any significant playing time was James Ward-Prowse, but even he has been a bit part player.

Koeman also openly criticised an academy game he had watched, which didn't go down too well.

However, no matter what a man-

ager might say when they are interviewed for the job, ultimately, no boss is going to play youngsters who they think aren't good enough.

As Koeman once pointed out, it's lovely having a five-year plan, but if he loses six or seven games in a row he gets sacked.

That will be the same for any manager, and though there are a few players on the fringes, in fairness this is a quiet time for the academy and, beyond the aforementioned players now in their 20s, there aren't a queue of teenagers behind them banging the door down to get in the team.

WHAT WAS HE LIKE FROM A MEDIA POINT OF VIEW?

What you saw was what he got, and he was like that with everyone

from the media to the people employed at the club to the players.

Koeman was a reserved character, icy cool, with little time for small talk, banter or pleasantries. He was business-like all the way, and nobody you met at the club had much different to say about him.

However, he was terrific to work with, quite possibly the best.

You felt as if you could ask him anything and he would give a straight answer.

The fact he had such a standing and reputation in the game meant he was never fazed by speaking his mind, or simply by being honest.

It's the hallmark of a top manager to be able to engage with the media in that way, and earn their respect, which Koeman did from the very outset.

It's the managers that hide behind clichés, and try to block the truth, that are the ones who have a deep seated lack of self-belief that is often their undoing in a dressing room.

Koeman could never be accused of that.

HOW WILL HE BE REMEMBERED BY SAINTS FANS?

The more ardent supporters will only be able to remember the sense of betrayal that has cut so deep on his departure.

To say so often that you would see out your contract and then to leave, and for a club that, with all due respect, feels a long way off where Koeman should set his sights, has really stung.

That will forever tarnish his memory for some.

In time, the more reasonable elements of the fan base will be able to view his two seasons with the club as a wonderful period.

He was a fantastic manager for Saints, and achieved great things, leading them into Europe in back-to-back campaigns.

If Saints cannot sustain that, it will look all the more remarkable.

As the wounds of his move heal, most will reflect on how good things were under Koeman, but the manner of his departure will always rankle for many.

Koeman's in-tray

RONALD Koeman has been installed as the new Everton manager after signing a three-year contract (remember, he signed one of those at Saints once - two years ago!)

Here, the Sports Pink looks at the things he must tackle over the coming weeks and months.

ROMELU LUKAKU'S FUTURE
The striker is away at Euro 2016 with Belgium but Koeman needs a swift decision on the man who became the first player since Gary Lineker in 1985-86 to score 20 league goals in a season. All indications point to the 23-year-old leaving Goodison Park and if that is to happen Koeman could really do with it taking place as soon as possible to prevent a drawn-out transfer saga. In any case, he should be looking for potential replacements now as Everton's options up front are limited any way.

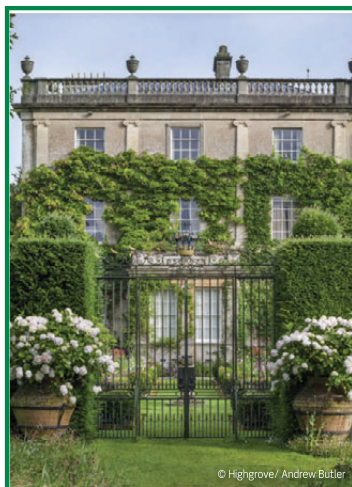
BUILD A TEAM AROUND JOHN STONES AND ROSS BARKLEY
The two 22-year-olds both under-performed in the last campaign and any residual unhappiness or frustration cannot be allowed to linger. Both players are coveted by bigger clubs and Koeman has to make the duo feel part of a new era and persuade them to stick around.

MAKE QUALITY SQUAD REINFORCEMENTS
Koeman has been promised a club record transfer kitty of £100million - plus the profits from any Lukaku sale - and he will need it. Outside of Everton's starting XI there is a lack of quality in depth. There is little competition for places in goal, at full-back, central midfield and up front.

MAINTAIN PROGRESS OF ACADEMY YOUNGSTERS
A number of youngsters made their first-team debuts last season with the likes of Matthew Pennington, Kieran Dowell, Tom Davies and Jonjoe Kenny impressing in brief spells. This group should be expected to supplement the squad again but they need regular football, while the academy conveyor belt needs to be maintained.



Ronald Koeman. Koeman



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Football's injustice moments ...

NEXT Tuesday marks 30 years since Diego Maradona's 'Hand of God' goal helped knock England out of the 1986 World Cup in Mexico.

Here, the Sports Pink takes a look back at some other controversial moments of perceived injustice.

DID GEOFF HURST'S SHOT CROSS THE LINE IN 1966?

It is a chapter of English football folklore which is still debated to this day - not least in Germany. The 1966 World Cup final at Wembley had gone into extra-time at 2-2 when Geoff Hurst clattered the ball up against the underside of the crossbar, the ball bounced down and was then hacked away. After consulting with his linesman, Swiss referee Gottfried Dienst awarded a goal for the hosts but there is still huge debate over whether the whole of the ball had crossed the line. England scored again in the final minute of extra-time as Hurst completed his hat-trick - and then, it really was all over.

FRANK LAMPARD'S ENGLAND GOAL THAT NEVER WAS...

Some say it was football karma - probably in Germany anyway - when 44 years later, England had a similar 'goal' ruled out during their 2010 World Cup



Frank Lampard had a 'goal' ruled out in the 2010 World Cup.

second-round contest against the Germans in Bloemfontein. Frank Lampard saw his effort loop up over Manuel Neuer onto the crossbar, bounce back down behind the line, before being picked up and immediately thrown forwards by the German goalkeeper. The England players appealed in disbelief, but Uruguayan referee Jorge Larrión waved play on. Had it stood, England would have been level at 2-2. Instead, Fabio Capello's side went on to crash out of the tournament 4-1, while Germany were beaten by eventual winners Spain in the semi-finals.

THE DISGRACE OF GIJÓN

At the 1982 World Cup in Spain, not all of the final group matches were played at the same time. Events at the El Molinón stadium meant that would change for future tournaments. When they kicked off in Gijón, West Germany and Austria both knew exactly what outcome they needed to qualify ahead of Algeria. The result? Germany went 1-0 up after only 10 minutes through Horst Hrubesch - and that was about that, as both teams were happy to see out the rest of the 'contest' with the minimum of fuss, which did not really go down well, apart from in West Germany and Austria, of course.

Cont on facing page

Is it fair to accuse Saints

AMBITION.

A big word, even if it's only got eight letters in it, *writes SIMON CARTER.*

As a football fan, you want your club to be showing it at all times.

But how is it measured?

By the size of your squad? By the size of the transfer fees you pay? By the size of your wage bill?

By the size of your managerial appointments?

Saints have had their ambition questioned during the protracted saga that was Ronald Koeman stabbing the club in the back and decamping to Everton.

Former Dell boss Dave Merrington went on local radio to question it.

Fans posting on the Daily Echo website have questioned it, and also on other social media forums.

But do Katharina Liebherr and the others who walk the corridors of power at St Mary's deserve those brickbats?

Little recap time here ...

Five years ago, in June 2011, Saints had just won promotion from the third tier of English football.

Five years on, they have just finished sixth in the Premier League, the richest league on the planet and, by all sensible accounts, the strongest.

If Saints have not been showing ambition in that time, God help the footballing world if they had been!

In the last few years - certainly since Ronald Koeman was appointed - they have regularly splashed out transfer fees in excess of £10m.

Outside of the elite clubs, Saints have one of the most expensively assembled squads in the Premier League.

Once last summer's transfer window had closed, Saints had the seventh most expensive squad in the top flight.

Indeed, due to the remarkable spending power of English clubs, only eight other clubs in Europe had spent more - Barcelona, Real Madrid, Valencia, Paris SG, Bayern Munich, Juventus, Inter and Napoli.

And that was four and a bit years on from playing in the third division!

What is ambition?

Back in January 2013, Saints decided Nigel Adkins had taken the club as far as he could. There was no room for sentiment and he was unceremoniously sacked.

What a way to treat a double promotion winning manager, said some outraged fans.

But the powers-that-be had identified Mauricio Pochettino as someone capable of taking the club forward.

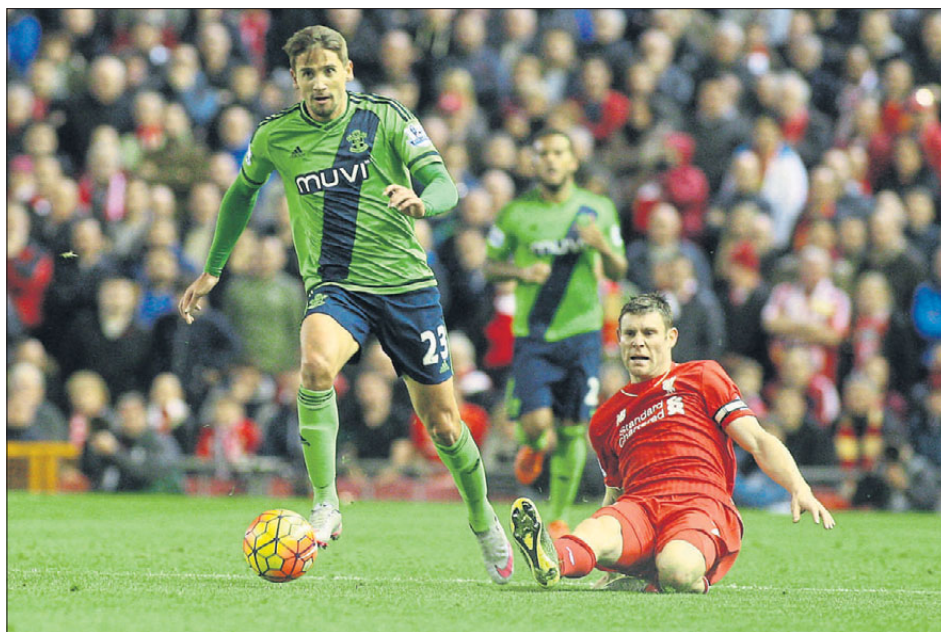
And they were proved right.

When Pochettino decided Saints were purely a stepping stone in his managerial career, the powers-that-be recruited Ronald Koeman.

If persuading one of the most respected figures in modern day European football history to come



Ronald Koeman. Does his move to Everton illustrate Saints' lack of ambition?



Gaston Ramirez - a very expensive Saints flop.

to your club is NOT a sign of ambition, I have no idea what 'ambition' means.

Saints have raked in millions from selling players in the last couple of years, but they have splashed out most of that on transfer fees for replacements.

Fans, though, would always like clubs to spend more, to bring in better players, and that is understandable.

But supporters need to be realistic.

Saints have twice shattered their transfer record in recent years,

bringing in foreign imports Gaston Ramirez and Dani Osvaldo.

Both arrived in a blizzard of hype and expectation, and both were complete and utter flops.

The Daily Echo has previously reported that those two players together cost Saints - when wages are

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ts of lacking ambition?



Dani Osvaldo - the Italian international striker was an expensive failure at St Mary's.



Saints owner Katharina Liebherr (right) and chairman Ralph Krueger.

taken into account – around £50m. That is a staggering sum of money.

The club have twice had their fingers severely burnt with regards to signing 'big names' so it is understandable they might be reluctant to go down that route again.

Anyway, it is a fallacy that clubs

have to spend £15m on individual players to achieve 'success'.

Look at Leicester. N'Golo Kante only cost £5.6m. Riyad Mahrez cost less than £1m. Jamie Vardy cost £1m from Fleetwood.

The entire squad which won the Premier League cost under £25. In other words, £5m than Liverpool

paid Saints for Dejan Lovren.

Look at Saints, who lest we forget were only three points behind both Manchester clubs in 2015/16.

Look at West Ham. Dimi Payet 'only' cost £10m last summer.

Were Leicester fans questioning their club's 'ambition' when signing those three aforementioned

players, and for those sums of money?

The skill, the real skill, is not in throwing vast amounts of cash at a project – like Everton could be primed to do with Koeman on board.

No, the skill lies in recruitment.

That is why Mauricio Pochettino returned to St Mary's in November 2014 to sweet-talk ... no, not a player ... but head of recruitment Paul Mitchell into joining him at White Hart Lane.

Saints have been the masters of skilled recruitment in recent times.

I bet you can't name many signings of recent times who would be sold for less than Saints paid for them, with the exception of Graziano Pelle possibly and that would be due to his age rather than his lack of goals.

No doubt Koeman's departure to Goodison Park will be followed by player departures. It has been ever thus at Saints.

Back in the 1980s, Steve Williams left for Arsenal, Danny Wallace for Manchester United.

In the early 1990s, Barry Horne left for Everton, Alan Shearer to Blackburn, Tim Flowers to Blackburn.

Remember, back in the early 90s Blackburn were the moneybags club, bankrolled by Sir Jack Walker's millions.

They were accused by their critics – ie, the big clubs who didn't win the title in 1994/95 – of 'buying' the Premier League.

The same clubs who have since 'bought' the title.

Moving into the new Millennium and again Saints have struggled to keep their star men.

Wayne Bridge left for Chelsea, James Beattie left for Everton, Peter Crouch to Liverpool, Theo Walcott to Arsenal, Gareth Bale to Tottenham, Chris Baird to Fulham, Andrew Surman to Wolves, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain to Arsenal ...

And on it goes ... Rickie Lambert to Liverpool, Adam Lallana to Liverpool, Dejan Lovren to Liverpool, Luke Shaw to Manchester United, Calum Chambers to Arsenal, Nathaniel Clyne to (yawn) Liverpool, Morgan Schneiderlin to Manchester United, Toby Alderweireld (chose Tottenham rather than a permanent move to Saints).

There is a common theme here.

Saints have been so successful in either producing their own players, or recruiting wisely from home and abroad, that bigger clubs have regularly come calling.

All those players I have roll-called who left Saints went to a 'bigger' club – ie, one which has won more trophies than Southampton in their history and who regularly attract bigger crowds. That is a fact.

They have all left for bigger wages as well. That is also a fact.

They have not left to sign for West Brom, or Stoke, or Watford, or QPR, or any other club 'smaller' than Saints. **Cont on page 8**

Football's injustice moments

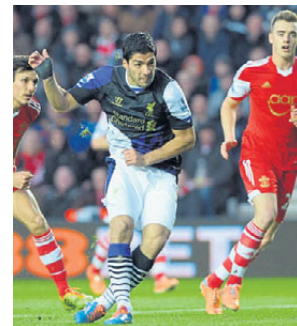
from facing page

SPAIN 'ROBBED' BY SOUTH KOREA

Joint-hosts South Korea became the first Asian nation to reach the semi-finals of the World Cup in 2002 after beating Spain on penalties, but should have been knocked out. Spain had already seen an early second-half effort by Ruben Baraja disallowed for offside, and then with the match in extra-time a "golden-goal" winner was chalked off after the assistant referee incorrectly ruled the ball had gone out before Joaquin crossed and Fernando Morientes headed home. Guus Hiddink's South Korea came through the lottery of spot-kicks to set up a clash with Germany in Seoul, when their impossible dream eventually came to an end. Spain, though, were left fuming, as Ivan Helguera declared: "What happened here was robbery."

HENRY'S HELPING HAND BREAKS IRISH HEARTS

The Republic of Ireland failed to reach the 2010 World Cup finals but only after Thierry Henry's handball had gifted France victory in their play-off. The second leg in Paris was locked at 1-1 on aggregate, so went into extra-time. A free-kick through the Irish penalty area was patted down at the far



Luis Suarez had a 'Hand of God' moment in 2010.

post by Henry, not just once, but twice, before he stabbed it across for William Gallas to bundle home and sent Les Bleus on to South Africa. Despite the "honest" admission of the former Arsenal favourite's guilt afterwards and the official Irish protests to FIFA calling for a replay, the result stood. It later emerged a settlement payment of five million euros (£3.6m) had been made by the governing body to the Football Association of Ireland to avert any potential legal claims.

SUAREZ - THE HAND OF GOD NOW BELONGS TO ME

Four years before Uruguay forward Luis Suarez found himself banned for four months for biting Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini at the 2014 World Cup, he hit the headlines following a dramatic end to the 2010 quarter-final against Ghana at Soccer City in Johannesburg. With the match heading for the lottery of penalties, the Black Stars were given an opportunity to seal a first place for Africa in the semi-finals when Dominic Adiyiah's goalbound header was handled on the line by Suarez. The then Ajax man was shown a red card, but Asamoah Gyan missed the penalty. Uruguay went on to win the penalty shoot-out, and Suarez reflected: "The Hand of God now belongs to me..."

This is what Saints will NOT do, and what they WILL try to do ...

from page 7

(Ok, I admit Fulham and Wolves are not bigger clubs than Saints, but at the time Baird and Surman left they were both in a higher division than Saints were – and Surman left when Saints' parent club Southampton Leisure Holdings PLC had gone into administration).

All those players have not left Saints because the club are showing no ambition. They have left for (on paper) a better chance to win trophies and a fatter wage packet.

No more, no less.

The one exception is Jack Cork, who left in January 2015 to sign for Swansea City. But he left because he was frustrated at a lack of first team opportunities under Koeman, and many fans were sympathetic to the midfielder's predicament as well).

If Saints were regularly losing managers to West Brom or Aston Villa or Watford or Stoke, then it would be a different story.

If Adam Lallana or Morgan Schneiderlin or Luke Shaw or Nathaniel Clyne had been so unhappy at St Mary's they had

ambition' jibes towards the club.

Saints have recently tied players like Van Dijk and Forster to long-term contracts. That, surely, is a sign of ambition?

Back in January, the board sanctioned a £4m move for Charlie Austin. At the time they were applauded for showing ambition, striking where other clubs had hesitated with regards to a proven Premier League scorer.

How quickly perceptions and attitudes can change – but that is football, though, at all levels.

Katharina Liebherr is part of a fabulously wealthy family, but has no intention of throwing tens of millions of that personal wealth in terms of squad strengthening.

That is not her way of doing things. If her dad had still been alive, history might have painted a different landscape at St Mary's, but we will never know.

What we do know is that Saints won't spend fantastically stupid sums of money on players like Dani Osvaldo. They won't pay mercenaries £100,000 a week to come and kiss the badge and then leave before their contract is up.

If Saints had offered Lallana, Clyne, Lovren, Schneiderlin or



Saints striker Charlie Austin.

signed for Norwich City on lower wages, then it would be a different story.

But that has not been the case.

I have always said there is a footballing hierarchy and Saints are now towards the top of it. They have to be, otherwise a man with the gravitas of Ronald Koeman would never have joined.

Saints have routinely plundered Glasgow Celtic – one of the most famous clubs in European football – for players in recent times. First it was Wanyama, then it was Forster, then it was Van Dijk.

Saints fans have a go at Liverpool for repeatedly circling St Mary's like vultures, but Celtic fans must view Saints in the same way.

Saints are a very attractive club these days. More attractive to top players than Glasgow Celtic. They will pay bigger wages than Celtic.

But clubs such as the Manchester pair, the Merseyside pair, Arsenal and Tottenham and Chelsea are more attractive than Saints, and will pay bigger wages.

I repeat – the days when Saints' best players want to leave for less money to join clubs like Norwich, Sunderland or Watford, then is the time to start hurling 'lack of

Shaw the same wages, exactly the same wages, as they were getting at their current clubs ... do you think any of them would have stayed?

Serious question.

I don't. They would still have gone, enticed by the lure of (standing a better chance) of winning trophies and playing in bigger games more often.

What Saints won't do is to offer Koeman's replacement £6m a year – the sort of salary the Dutchman will be trousering at Goodison Park.

I can't believe many right-thinking Saints supporters would think the club should pay that sort of obscene wage either.

So, that's what Saints WON'T do.

What they WILL do is try and sign quality players for reasonable sums – if £10m plus can ever seriously be viewed as a 'reasonable' sum – and appoint managers who will look to buy into the club's vision and progress it.

And let's be honest, Saints haven't done a bad job in that respect, have they?

How can Saints keep

HERE is the question, and I have no idea how you arrive at the answer.

Just how do Saints go about finding a manager who will want to stay with them for more than a couple of years?

They say continuity in football is key, but events at St Mary's have thrown that thought out the window, writes **SIMON CARTER**.

Since August 2010, the club have sacked two managers and seen two others walk out on them.

Despite all that upheaval, Saints have still recorded seven consecutive seasons of improvement.

That has catapulted them from seventh in the third tier of English football in May 2010 to sixth in the Premier League in May 2016.

Ronald Koeman this week became the latest man to vacate one of the hottest seats in English football.

He left with a win percentage of 48 – the highest of any Saints boss in Premier League history (beating, some might be surprised, Paul Sturrock's 42.8 per cent win record).

Koeman's move to Everton was officially confirmed on Tuesday morning – two days short of the second anniversary of him being appointed Saints boss.

When he left, he was the fifth longest serving manager in the top flight.

That speaks volumes for the demands and pressures of the richest league on planet earth.

Still, Koeman, with 728 days in charge at St Mary's, lasted longer than his predecessor.

Mauricio Pochettino managed just 494 before he decided to take the yellow brick road from the south coast to the bright lights on north London.

(If you are interested, Steve Wigley had the shortest reign of any permanent Saints boss/head coach in the PL era. He was in charge for 109 days, which in the eyes of most fans at the time was 109 days too long).

Saints are now searching for their 15th Premier League manager.

That is a huge figure, bearing in mind Murdoch's cash cow has only been dispensing its milk since 1992. And, bear in mind also, Saints weren't even in the Premier League between 2005-06 and 2011/12 inclusive!

Here are the previous 14 – Ian Branfoot, Alan Ball, Dave Merrington, Graeme Souness, Dave Jones, Glenn Hoddle, Stuart Gray, Gordon Strachan, Paul Sturrock, Steve Wigley, Harry Redknapp, Nigel Adkins, Pochettino and Koeman.

Of those, Jones was the longest surviving with 948 days in charge – and he would no doubt have reached four figures but for the controversial decision to place him on gardening leave when child abuse allegations – later unfounded – were levelled at him in January 2000.

Jones was in his third full season as a Premier League manager, and no one else in Saints history has lasted that long.

Strachan was next highest with 844 days, before he resigned in February



Ronald Koeman - another Saints manager not to see out his contract.



Dave Jones has lasted longer than any other Saints boss in the Premier League.

2004 after news broke that he was planning to leave anyway after the 2003/04 season finished.

The late, great Alan Ball used to say that all managers needed three years before they could really be judged.

When I used to interview Bally for his Sports Pink column, he was regu-

larly dumbfounded with the haste in which some clubs ditched their managers.

God knows what he would make of the situation now.

Fifty-four managers were sacked throughout the top four English divisions in the 2015/16 season.

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ep hold of their bosses?



Eddie Howe's star is still high after his successes at Bournemouth.



Lawrie McMenemy believes Saints should appoint a British manager.

That was a total the chief executive of the League Managers Association described as 'embarrassing'.

Richard Bevan said the figure of 54 for the 2015-16 season was the highest since 2001 and pointed out that just five of those managers who were forced out are currently

back in work, while a further 12 bosses resigned.

"It's another very relentless, disappointing and embarrassing season for the sport," he said.

Nine Premier League clubs have changed their manager since the start of last season.

Brendan Rodgers became the

first top flight managerial casualty when Liverpool sacked him in October.

Aston Villa dismissed Tim Sherwood later that month, while Gary Monk and Jose Mourinho were sacked by Swansea and Chelsea respectively in December.

March saw Steve McClaren and

Remi Garde leave relegation-threatened Newcastle and Villa respectively, while last month Roberto Martinez parted ways with Everton and Quique Sanchez Flores was ousted by Watford.

As a result of Everton poaching Koeman, Saints are now on the look-out – again – for a new manager.

Dick Advocaat also resigned as Sunderland boss back in October and Sam Allardyce, his successor at the Stadium of Light, recently suggested there could be no English managers left in the top flight 'very shortly'.

Allardyce was one of just three full-time English managers who ended the last Premier League season – along with Crystal Palace's Alan Pardew and Bournemouth's Eddie Howe – though Burnley's Sean Dyche and Steve Bruce of Hull will be joining them in 2016/17.

Howe is one of the longest serving managers in the top four divisions.

Having returned to Dean Court from Burnley in October 2012, he is the tenth longest serving boss – a list easily topped by Arsene Wenger's 19 years plus at Arsenal.

Elsewhere in the top flight, newly promoted Hull have had Bruce in charge for just over four years.

Relegated from the Premier League in 2014/15, the Tigers kept faith with the boss when others would surely have fired him.

Ditto Dyche, the 11th longest serving boss in the top four divisions, who has taken Burnley straight back up after relegation.

Sometimes continuity can work.

As for Saints, where do they go from here?

Down the route of another foreign manager, a young-ish bloke with a good track record and who will buy into the club's vision.

But another successful appointment brings the obvious prospect that they, too, might 'do a Poch' or 'do a Koeman' and quit as soon as a bigger club comes calling offering a larger transfer budget and far bigger wages.

Saints are probably fed up with managers using them as a stepping stone to potentially bigger, better (and richer) things.

At the time of writing, Frank de Boer's agent had ruled his client out of replacing Koeman at St Mary's.

That is a shame, as de Boer would have been a good fit for Saints. But, like Koeman, like Pochettino, who could say whether he wouldn't be tempted by bigger fish 12 months, 24 months, down the line?

Saints legend Lawrie McMenemy, writing in his Daily Echo column recently, urged Saints to follow two foreign appointments with a British one.

Lawrie's summary was this – a British boss would be more likely to stay put rather than hop from one club to another every couple of years.

Continued on page 10

Five great US Opens recalled ...

OAKMONT is set to provide a daunting test for the world's best golfers in this week's US Open.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at five other occasions when the championship has lived up to its fearsome reputation.

Winged Foot (1974)

A year after Johnny Miller won the US Open with the first 63 in major championship history, the USGA exacted swift revenge in such a fashion that the tournament became known as the Massacre at Winged Foot. Gary Player was the only player to match par in the opening round and not one player was under par after any round. Fifty-four-hole leader Tom Watson collapsed to a closing 79 as Hale Irwin won the first of three US Opens on seven over.

Shinnecock Hills (2004)

Retief Goosen's winning score may have been four under par, but runner-up Phil Mickelson was the only other player in red figures and the final round saw 28 of the 66 players fail to break 80 on a par-70 layout. A combination of extremely dry conditions, fast greens and a questionable pin position even led to a stoppage of play while the seventh green had to be watered mid-



South Africa's Retief Goosen.

round.

Winged Foot (2006)

Thirty two years after Hale Irwin's victory on seven over par, Australian Geoff Ogilvy backed into a first major title when Jim Furyk, Colin Montgomerie and Phil Mickelson all made a mess of the 72nd hole. Furyk only bogeyed, but Montgomerie made a double bogey after a perfect drive and Mickelson also took six to leave Ogilvy alone on five over. "I think I was the beneficiary of a little bit of charity," Ogilvy admitted.

Oakmont (2007)

For the second successive year five over par was good enough for victory as Angel Cabrera held off the challenge of Furyk and Tiger Woods. Cabrera and England's Nick Dougherty were the only players to break par on day one, while 54-hole leader Aaron Baddeley collapsed to a closing 80.

Oakland Hills (1951)

Ben Hogan won the US Open for the second year running on seven over par after a three-under 67 in the final round, prompting his famous quote: "I'm glad I brought this course, this monster, to its knees." Runner-up Clayton Heafner's closing 69 was the only other sub-par score all week.

Better price of success than failure!

from page 9

He has a point, no doubt about it.

Look at Bruce's four years plus at Hull, or Tony Pulis' seven years at Stoke, or Mark Hughes' three years plus at Stoke, or Howe's three years plus at Cherries.

Look at David Moyes, who stayed at Everton for nine years prior to accepting the poisoned chalice which was always going to be replacing Sir Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford.

Moyes' name has been unsurprisingly touted with the current Saints vacancy, and you can see why.

He has shown he is happy to stick around at a club for a few years, and has a record of promoting youth which is akin to Saints' own vision.

And even if he did well at St Mary's, Moyes would probably not appear on the radar of the real glamour clubs. After all, he's been there and got the t-shirt, even though it ultimately ended up tatty and torn.

But is that what Saints want? Someone who flopped when the pressure was on at Old Trafford? One who lasted barely a year at Real Sociedad in Spain?

Is that what Saints' fans want?

Or do they want the club to pursue foreign names, even if it's somebody they have never really heard of?

After all, how many Saints fans could



Tony Pulis spent seven years at Stoke City.

have told you too much about Pochettino prior to his arrival?

The Argentine had never guided Espanyol into the top six of La Liga, but Saints had obviously identified something in his DNA which attracted them? And credit to Saints, for they were proved right.

The biggest names are not always the best catches.

When push comes to shove, what is the bottom line for Saints and their fanbase?

Ultimately, they want the club to do well, to keep on challenging for European football (and some extended cup runs would come in handy too!)

If that is to remain the case, they need to get used to whoever the manager is being courted by bigger and wealthier clubs.

The alternative is unpalatable.

The alternative is whoever comes in is not courted by bigger and wealthier clubs because they are not a raging success.

If Saints are struggling, the manager is more likely to be sacked than lured away by Tottenham or Everton.

The price of success, therefore, is all too obvious – risk losing the manager (and players) to wealthier clubs.

That, though, is surely better than the cost of failure ..

Koeman's top 10 wi

RONALD Koeman rightly angered many supporters in the way he left Saints, but nonetheless he left St Mary's after two record-breaking campaigns – neither of which should ever be forgotten.

Koeman, despite assurances he wouldn't, departed St Mary's with the money of Everton's new billionaire businessman Farhad Moshiri luring him in to becoming one of the best-paid managers in the world at Goodison Park.

It should be remembered, though, that the Dutchman led Saints to record finishes in the Premier League in consecutive seasons, as well as qualification to the Europa League.

There were a number of sensational results, which will live long the memory of Saints supporters – even if they are still trying to suppress any thoughts of Koeman's surprising exit to Merseyside.

Here, the Sports Pink lists ten of the best results during the Koeman era.

13 September 2014

Premier League - Saints 4 Newcastle 0

Following a summer exodus of the club's leading stars, Koeman had to rebuild the Saints squad.

Luke Shaw, Adam Lallana, Dejan Lovren, Rickie Lambert and Calum Chambers had all left in a dramatic close season, but the club had recruited brilliantly.

Koeman's eight new signings settled in at a surprising speed, with even Ronald himself taken aback.

One of the new boys, striker Graziano Pelle, took his tally to four goals for the season with a brace to make it 2-0 before 20 minutes had gone against Alan Pardew's side.

Newcastle were fairly incompetent in this one, but, still, Saints were superb in their dismantling of the Magpies, with Jack Cork and Morgan Schneiderlin adding two more in the second half to make 4-0.

"A little bit surprised (how quickly it has come together) because normally after so much change you need time but time in football is sometimes not done," said Koeman post-match.

18 October 2014

Premier League - Saints 8 Sunderland 0

Koeman gave Saints fans memories that will last an entire lifetime in this unbelievable victory.

Words can barely describe it; perhaps only the scoreline can do the whole thing justice.

It all started with that Santiago Vergini own goal, which has gone down in history as one of the most spectacular in Premier League history.



Graziano Pelle heads Saints' first goal in their 4-0 thrashing of Newcastle in September 2014.



Graziano Pelle celebrates scoring Saints' fifth goal with Dusan Tadic during the remarkable 8-0 thrashing of

Saints 1

The Argentine volleyed in from 18 yards before Graziano Pelle and Jack Cork made it 3-0 at half time.

The onslaught continued after the interval as Liam Bridcutt's own goal was followed by a second Pelle strike.

Dusan Tadic, Victor Wanyama

and Sadio Mane finished off the drubbing.

11 January 2015

Premier League - Manchester United 0

That iconic picture of Dusan Tadic celebrating the winning goal of this game at Old Trafford with shirt off, arms pushed down and muscles tensed like a body builder encapsulates what it meant to Saints to win at United for the first

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ns as Saints boss



Dusan Tadic, with shirt off, celebrates scoring Saints' winner at Old Trafford in January 2015.



Sadio Mane celebrates one of his rapid hat-trick goals against Aston Villa in May 2015.

time in 27 years.

Tadic netted on 69 minutes as he hit home a rebounded Graziano Pelle shot, but it was the way Saints contained the Red Devils' attacking big guns that was especially impressive.

Saints denied the likes of Angel Di Maria, Wayne Rooney, Juan

Mata and Robin van Persie from getting even one shot on target on Fraser Forster's goal.

The result sent Koeman's men into third in the Premier League as their outstanding campaign continued into the new year.

16 May 2015

Premier League - Saints 6 Aston Villa 1

Sadio Mane scored the fastest hat-trick in Premier League history as Saints demolished Aston Villa.

Mane's three goals came in two

minutes and 56 seconds as Saints went 3-0 up inside 16 minutes.

They were 5-1 up at half-time with two strikes from Shane Long, while Christian Benteke headed home his 15th goal of the season for Villa before Graziano Pelle's late volley.

3 October 2015

Premier League - Chelsea 1 Saints 3

Jose Mourinho's side were searching desperately to turn their ailing season around.

They had won the Premier League just four months earlier, but had started their defence of their crown atrociously.

There was a glimmer of hope as Willian hit a free-kick over Maarten Stekelenburg's head and there was an expectation the Blues would push on from their.

Saints had other ideas and were level just before the break as Steven Davis netted on the half-volley from Graziano Pelle's chest down.

Sadio Mane's fierce pace then drove fear into Chelsea's defence as he managed to squeeze the ball past a flat-footed John Terry and hit home to make it 2-1.

A break away goal confirmed victory as Pelle hit a clinical finish from the right as Mane used his pace again to splinter the Chelsea defence.

26 December 2015

Premier League - Saints 4 Arsenal 0

Five defeats in six games, including a crushing 6-1 defeat to Liverpool in the Capital One Cup quarter final, had left the season in the balance for Saints.

Out of one of the cups and struggling in the Premier League, this brilliant result came as a huge relief - although it was only temporary respite from the poor form.

Shane Long netted twice and captain Jose Fonte was on target too, celebrating with gritted teeth and impassioned badge slapping, as the committed long-serving defender released the tension and frustration of recent weeks.

It was, however, right-back Cuco Martina that came away as the true hero of this game after his unreal goal.

On his first start for the club, the Curacao international popped up miles from goal just off the right flank.

His first time shot with the outside of his right boot, swerved out - seemingly heading wide - before, as if by magic, curling back inside the post and beyond Petr Cech in the Arsenal goal.

It was a jaw-dropping moment.

23 January 2016

Premier League - Manchester United 0 Saints 1

continued on next page

Budgets for everyone at SW19 ...

A Wimbledon day out is one of sport's great occasions.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at Wimbledon trips for two, with budgets ranging from modest to millionaire.

On a £50 budget

The Wimbledon grounds pass is a steal at £25. Centre Court, Court One and Court Two will be out of bounds, but that hardly matters in the first week when major stars play on the smaller outside courts. Bring a packed lunch to save on the cost of food. Each spectator is allowed to bring in a bottle of wine or champagne too, so feel free to bring one from home.

Ground passes: £25 per ticket

Up to £250

You'll have to queue in Wimbledon Park, almost certainly overnight, and that can be an experience in itself. But Centre Court is worth all the patience in the world.

For the first four days of the tournament, tickets are comparable with Premier League football prices, if not cheaper.

Have a glass of Pimm's, some of Wimbledon's famous strawberries, and round the day off with dinner in leafy Wimbledon Village, a 10-minute walk up the road, where curry house Thai Tho - reputedly a favourite of Maria Sharapova - is one of several excellent, affordable restaurants.

Centre Court ticket (first four days): £53-£69 per ticket

Wimbledon food and drink budget (including breakfast of course): £60

Dinner in Wimbledon Village: £50



Wimbledon budgets can range from modest to millionaire.

Up to £350

The second Wednesday is the last day on which Centre Court tickets go on general sale, and by this stage the action can take some beating.

You should see two men's quarter-finals, if the tournament is on schedule, and that could mean watching Andy Murray in action. Again, you'll need to be prepared to queue a long time.

After enjoying the tennis, exploring the grounds and availing yourselves of the champagne tent's fizz, enjoy a pre-tube outdoor dinner at The Original Fish and Chip Co near Southfields station on your way home, watching the tennis crowds flock by.

Centre Court ticket (men's quarter-finals day): £126 per ticket

Wimbledon food and drink budget: £60

Fish and chips in Southfields: £20

Up to £12,500

There'll be just a handful of change from that eye-watering sum for two special men's singles final tickets, with hospitality that includes access to a free champagne-stocked bar and a four-course Albert Roux-designed lunch, plus afternoon tea and a chauffeur car service.

The hospitality, provided by a tournament partner, also includes a table visit from a tennis celebrity.

There should be just enough left in the high-rollers' budget for a night in one of London's top hotels.

Men's final top-tier (Players' Table) hospitality ticket: £4,945 plus VAT per ticket

Deluxe king room at The Dorchester: around £625

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Koeman's top 10 Saints successes

from page 11

It was a dream debut for Charlie Austin as the new £4m signing from QPR popped up with a late winner at Old Trafford just seven minutes into his first appearance.

Manchester United laid on a typically turgid performance that were so prevalent during Louis van Gaal's reign, with Saints pulling off the ultimate smash-and-grab victory.

It meant that Koeman once more got the better of arch-nemesis Van Gaal, but also saw Saints record back-to-back victories at Old Trafford.

Jeers and boos rang around for Van Gaal after United managed to record just one shot on target in 90 minutes.

Saints never looked uncomfortable at the back, but had to wait until the 87th minute to find the net.

Fellow substitute James Ward-Prowse delivered a free-kick into the box that Austin turned home past United goalkeeper David De Gea.

Raucous celebration followed in the away end.

20 March 2016

**Premier League - Saints
3 Liverpool 2**



Charlie Austin's goal celebration at Old Trafford.

Liverpool absolutely battered Saints in the early stages of this one.

There were moments when many at St Mary's looked at each other and thought 'here we go again' in expectation of a repeat of the 6-1 thrashing in the Capital One Cup earlier in the season.

Philippe Coutinho and Daniel Sturridge gave Jurgen Klopp's side the lead, which they didn't look like sacrificing as the first half came to an end.

There was hope for Saints soon into the second half as they won a penalty after Martin Skrtel's foul on Graziano Pelle, but Sadio Mane squandered the chance to put Koeman's side right back in it and end a personal goal drought that had rumbled on for 16 games.

However, the Senegal international made amends soon after as he hit home to make it 2-1.

Saints then completed the comeback as Pelle and Mane netted in the last ten minutes.

1 May 2016

**Premier League - Saints
4 Manchester City 2**

cont on facing page

Saints: So many sum

SO, another summer of upheaval at Saints is on the cards.

It has been forever thus, writes **SIMON CARTER**.

Ronald Koeman's impending departure from St Mary's will ensure another fascinating close season at Southampton Football Club, who probable exits and inevitable new signings.

Again, it seems to have been forever thus.

Here, the Daily Echo looks back at recent summers at St Mary's.

And, reliving some of the close seasons, no wonder people have often commented on the long-running 'Southampton FC Soap Opera'.

Still, one thing to say to those people who describe Saints as a soap opera.

They're right.

2005

Following relegation from the Premier League, this was always going to be a summer of upheaval.

Some players would obviously look to leave, rather than play in the second tier of English football.

So it proved.

Peter Crouch, having just made his senior England debut at the end of his first season with Saints, joined European champions Liverpool for £7m.

Kevin Phillips also remained in the top flight, joining Aston Villa for £750,000, while Fabrice Fernandes joined Bolton.

Paul Telfer joined Gordon Strachan's Celtic for £200,000, Anders Svensson returned to his native Sweden to sign for Elfsborg, Jason Dodd was released and joined Brighton, while Mikael Nilsson left St Mary's after just one forgettable season to sign for Greeks Panathinaikos.

Lots of outgoing, therefore.

Manager Harry Redknapp stayed put, though, and he recruited Dave Bassett to his coaching staff.

At a different end of the coaching scale, Saints chairman Rupert Lowe also reacted to relegation by bringing in England's rugby union World Cup winning coach Sir Clive Woodward.

It was hard to think of a bigger culture clash than the likes of Redknapp and Bassett working in the same environment as Woodward and his team of specialist coaches including vision specialists.

2006

Even by Saints' standards, this was a big summer of change.

And this time, in the corridors of power at St Mary's as well as in the playing squad.

Off the pitch, chairman Rupert Lowe and his boardroom supporters were ousted by a consortium of businessmen led by Michael Wilde.

Against an increasingly bitter backdrop of claims and counter-claims, Wilde's regime – which also included legendary manager



Michael Wilde, left, ousted Rupert Lowe, right, in June 2006 - but paired up with him two years later.



Gareth Bale left Saints in the summer of 2007, aged just 17, to sign for Tottenham.

Lawrie McMenemy and people with previous football administration experience – forced Lowe's resignation just a few days before a planned shareholders meeting of Southampton Leisure Holdings PLC.

On the pitch, Wilde's regime ini-

tially handed boss George Burley around £6m for new signings – and that was big money back then for a Championship club.

In came Grzegorz Rasiak for £2m from Tottenham, plus Sunderland keeper Kelvin Davis, Pompey's Jhon Viafara, Manchester City

youngster Bradley Wright-Phillips, Jermaine Wright and Chris Makin.

Oh yes, and Saints also signed Pele.

2007

After failing to win promotion –

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mmers of upheaval!



Jan Poortvliet arrived at Saints in the summer of 2008 - and quickly discovered a liking for posing as James Bond in front of expensive cars.



Markus Liebherr arrived as Saints' saviour in the worrying summer of 2009.

Saints losing in the Championship play off semi finals to Derby on penalties - it was obvious the club's star names would be sold.

Sounds familiar, that, doesn't it?

And so it proved, with teen sensation Gareth Bale signing for Tottenham for around £5m.

That was a lot of money for a

17-year-old, but it's fair to say Spurs got value for money!

In addition, Chris Baird - Saints' player of the year in 2006/07 - joined Fulham for just over £3m while, shortly after the 2007/08 season had begun, striker Kenwyne Jones moved to Sunderland for £6m.

And the man who helped put him back in the corridors of power at St Mary's?

Why, none other than Michael Wilde. Yes, the Michael Wilde who had helped remove him two years earlier.

One of Lowe's first steps on returning was to dispense with Nigel Pearson, the manager who had helped keep Saints in the Championship.

In his place, he brought in the mainly unknown Dutchman Jan Poortvliet as a head coach.

Even though he had played for the Netherlands in the 1978 World Cup final, it was still very much a case of 'Jan Who?'

Poortvliet had a good record of promoting youth during his managerial career, and was therefore handed a primarily young Saints squad painfully lacking in experience and told to get on with it.

Saints did at least make one good signing in the summer of 2008 - a teenage Morgan Schneiderlin arriving for £1.2m from Strasbourg.

2009

Another summer, another massive summer of upheaval at St Mary's.

And this one could well have been the club's last as they teetered on the brink of potential oblivion at times.

Saints had ended a disastrous 2008/09 campaign relegated from the Championship, and with their parent company - Southampton Leisure Holdings PLC - in administration.

That saw Lowe depart St Mary's for the second, and last, time - and administrator Mark Fry desperately left scrambling to find a buyer to keep Saints in existence.

Leon Crouch - one of the local businessmen who had helped kick Lowe out of power in 2006 - bankrolled the club's wagebill for a while to buy Fry more time.

Even by Saints' standards, this was a remarkable summer.

Matt Le Tissier put his name to a consortium that eventually collapsed into farce when it was revealed that a major player in it - Michael Fialka - was a letting agent who lived with his parents.

Fialka had been talked up as the Pinnacle consortium's 'money man' who would help them buy Saints for £15m.

Eventually, of course, Swiss-based billionaire businessman Markus Liebherr emerged as Saints' shining white knight to rescue them from extinction.

Within days, Mark Wotte - who had replaced countryman Poortvliet as boss in January 2008 - had been sacked and Alan Pardew brought in.

The St Mary's revolution had started.

2010

By Saints' standards, a quiet summer. Cont on page 14

Koeman's top 10 wins as Saints boss

from facing page

Sadio Mane's late-season form continued as he hit a hat-trick to defeat Champions League semi-finalists Manchester City.

Manuel Pellegrini's side visited St Mary's in the middle of their Champions League showdown with Real Madrid and suffered at the hands of lively Saints after making five changes to the team.

Kelechi Iheanacho gave City hope with a brace, but Mane's treble, combined with Shane Long's opener, down one of the Premier League's big guns.

8 May 2016

Premier League - Tottenham 1 Saints 2

A sensational end to the Premier League season that included seven wins in their last nine games was made even better with a superb win at White Hart Lane.

Saints, on their mission for European football, were in fine form, but fell behind to Spurs early on as Heung-Min Son hit home after a mistake by Fraser Forster.

Spurs had been in the running for the title, but had completely choked in the weeks building up to this game,



Steven Davis celebrates after Saints' win at Tottenham.

allowing Leicester to take the crown.

Mauricio Pochettino's side keen to finish the season on a high in their last home game and secure that point to finish second and above arch-rivals Arsenal.

Saints ruined their party as Steven Davis popped up with a brace to send Saints on the brink of Europa League football for a second successive season.

Spurs went on to lose 5-1 against relegated Newcastle on the final day, allowing Arsenal to leapfrog them into the runners-up spot.

● The Sports Pink's top ten doesn't include some other memorable results that shaped Koeman's time in charge.

There was also that superb 2-1 win at Stoke City in March at the beginning of Saints' superb run to finish sixth and in the Europa League.

In Koeman's first season there was also the 2-1 at Newcastle when loanee Eljero Elia netted a brace.

That match in January 2015 followed a New Year's Day win over Arsenal at St Mary's 2-0 and another victory over the Gunners at the Emirates in the Capital One Cup in September 2014.

Of course, Koeman's first win in the Premier League, as Saints defeated West Ham, shouldn't be forgotten.

SAINTS SPOTLIGHT



So many summers of upheaval at St Mary's

from page 13

Only a handful of signings, and none of them – with respect to the likes of Fraser Richardson, Ryan Dickson and Danny Butterfield – to set the pulses racing.

Of course, this being Saints, it was a lull before another storm.

The storm of late August 2010 and the controversial sacking of Alan Pardew.

2011

No managerial changes this summer following Saints' promotion as League 1 runners-up.

Only one crown jewel was allowed to leave – teenager winger Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain joining Arsenal for £11m.

2012

With Saints back in the Premier League after clinching back to back promotions, fans could expect some big money signings.

So it proved. Saints twice broke their transfer record this summer as they prepared to rub shoulders with the elite of English (and Welsh!) football for the first time since 2005.

First off, Jay Rodriguez was signed from Burnley for £6m – and he was followed after the 2012/13 season had started by £12m Uruguayan playmaker Gaston Ramirez.

The excitement juices were really flowing now ...

2013

No managerial changes this summer – Saints having made their latest one the previous January when Nigel Adkins was unceremoniously sacked and Mauricio Pochettino appointed on the same day.

Trumped

Poch's first – and as it turned out only – pre season at St Mary's saw him bring in Victor Wanyama (£12m) and Dejan Lovren (£8m).

Those signings were trumped, though, by Saints breaking their club record transfer fee again to land £15m Italian international hothead Dani Osvaldo.

He would turn out to be one of the biggest wastes of money in Premier League history. And that is certainly saying something.

2014

One of the maddest summers in Saints' history.

And again, that is certainly saying something.

The close season began with much talk about whether Mauricio Pochettino, having led Saints to a joint best Premier League finish of eighth, would carry on his good work.

After all, the man who had brought him to Saints – chairman Nicola Cortese – had left a few months earlier.

Fans didn't have to wait long for the an-



Jay Rodriguez was Saints' record signing when he arrived from Burnley in the summer of



Adam Lallana, left, was one of five main players who left Saints in the summer of 2014.



Morgan Schneiderlin, having been denied a move in 2014, left for Manchester United the

summer.

No.

And once he had decamped to White Hart Lane, the exit gates were well and truly flung open at St Mary's.

Rickie Lambert, skipper Adam Lallana

and Dejan Lovren all joined Liverpool – the latter scandalously saying 'my head is at Anfield' while the rest of his body was under contract to Saints.

In addition, Luke Shaw was tempted by Manchester United's riches – well, which

teenager wouldn't be? – and Calum Chambers decided to follow the well-trodden path from St Mary's to the Emirates Stadium in north London.

Morgan Schneiderlin also wanted out, but (for once) Saints played hardball and refused him to link up again with the man who had started the stampede down Britannia Road.

However, the King is Dead, Long Live the King!

And Ronald Koeman was duly appointed as Saints boss – to throw his comforting arms around a club seemingly in crisis.

Within weeks, he had started to rebuild the squad ripped apart by wealthy vultures with poorer recruitment records than Saints.

In came Graziano Pelle, Fraser Forster, Dusan Tadic, Ryan Bertrand and Shane Long before the season had begun, followed by Sadio Mane prior to the summer transfer window slamming shut.

2015

A quieter summer in comparison to 12 months earlier – not that, in reality, it could have been any noisier.

Only two crown jewels decided their futures lay away from St Mary's, and instead lay at far bigger (and far wealthier) clubs.

Morgan Schneiderlin was finally allowed to leave, racking up at Old Trafford, while Nathaniel Clyne followed another well-trodden path and pitched up at Anfield.

He linked up again with Adam Lallana and Dejan Lovren, and would never have expected to end his first season with Liverpool finishing two places behind his former employers.

(Memo to Ronald Koeman – the grass isn't always ... well, you know).

New Koeman signings included Juanmi, Cedric and Jordy Clasie.

Happy

He also brought in Steven Caulker on loan from QPR, but not even Koeman gets everything right ...

After the season had started, in came another centre half, Virgil Van Dijk.

He was to prove a slightly better signing than Caulker.

2016

Ronald Koeman had repeatedly told Saints fans he was happy at their club.

Yes, he frequently replied when (frequently) asked if he would see out the final year of his contract.

Saints fans, therefore, had no reason to disbelieve a man who appeared to embody characteristics of honesty and integrity.

Until Everton started waving large amounts of money, that is.

Now the ever-busy Saints rollercoaster has been oiled up and is ready for another summer of action.

This is where we came in ..

SAINTS SPOTLIGHT



An Everton view on new boss Ron

Top six will be a success in Ron's first season

GREG O'Keefe from the Liverpool Echo gives a Blues view on Ronald Koeman's arrival at Goodison Park.

What is the feeling like among Everton fans now Ronald Koeman has arrived?

They're pleased that the uncertainty is over and they have a new manager who has the stature to hopefully take the club forward. While Roberto Martinez's appointment back in 2013 split opinion among fans, they seem united in their confidence that the club have the right man this time.

Why do you think he was the Everton board's choice to replace Roberto Martinez?

He was the best option out there. His progress at St Mary's and style of football would seem to represent a step forward from Martinez's dogmatic possession obsession. He's a big name too which seems to reflect the club's ambition in the Farhad Moshiri era.

What would you consider a successful first season for Koeman at Goodison Park?

It's got to be a top six finish and a good go at the cups.

Do you think he will come under pressure from the fans early on if results aren't good?

He'll get due patience in the first quarter of the season but I don't think he can rely on the notion of a transitional period stretching to a whole campaign. Given what Everton have had to pay to get him, and the funds he's going to have available, he'll be expected to deliver reasonably quickly.

There was much discussion about whether Everton are a much bigger club than Southampton. I guess we know your take on that 'argument'...

I find it a bit of a puerile argument to be honest. They're both Premier League clubs with fine traditions and great fan bases. If historical success dictates which club is bigger then it's Everton; but obviously the last couple of seasons have seen the Saints in ascendancy. Nobody is oblivious to the fact that the main factor in luring Koeman is Moshiri's money though.



Ronald Koeman pictured at Goodison Park, when Saints played there in April.



Ronald Koeman faces a battle to hang on to Everton's top scorer Romelu Lukaku.

Will crown jewels like John Stones and Romelu Lukaku stay now a man with the gravitas of Ronald Koeman has taken over?

Honestly? It's still going to be an uphill task because they'll be offered equally big money and Champions League football elsewhere. But with Koeman in charge we have an improved chance of keeping them.

What areas of the team need strengthening, and what Saints

players could improve last season's Everton team?

Basically the spine of the team plus a winger. To be fair you'd have to say most Saints players could improve us on last season's below par showing! Certainly Fraser Forster would, as goalkeeper is our priority position to strengthen. Virgil van Dijk was heavily linked with the Blues before he ended up on the South Coast and he'd also improve what we have. Elsewhere - Sadio Mane would probably make an

impact as, possibly, would James Ward-Prowse.

Are you worried that, having walked out on Saints with a year left on his contract, Koeman would do the same to Everton if a 'bigger' club came calling?

It's an interesting one. Clearly if he replicates his success on Merseyside and subsequently Arsenal or even Barcelona come calling then Everton fans would be naive to think he'd hang around.

Chin up, Gareth!

WALES' hopes of qualifying for the knockout stage of Euro 2016 suffered a blow with a last-gasp 2-1 defeat to England in Lens.

Here, the Sports Pink outlines five reasons why Wales fans should still be confident of making the last 16 ahead of Monday's final group game against Russia.

GARETH BALE

Wales' star man scored seven goals in qualifying and has taken that form into the tournament with two strikes already. Both have been trademark free-kicks and, although they might well have been saved, Bale's reputation means he has a psychological advantage over goalkeepers these days. There is also the suspicion we have yet to see the best of Bale in France, and Russia's need to beat Wales should play into his hands on the break.

SELF-BELIEF

Much was made of Wales' passion and pride before the England game when Bale suggested they had more of it than their neighbours. But it was their self-belief which shone through in the minutes and hours after the England defeat. Skipper Ashley Williams led an immediate post-match huddle with the message being that qualifying was still very much within Wales' grasp.

MEDIOCRE RUSSIA

Russia have done little to make an impression in this tournament - apart from off the pitch where their hooligans have made headline news. They were comprehensively outplayed by England in Marseille before coming up with a late equaliser. Against Slovakia - who Wales beat 2-1 in their opening game - they did not wake up until the final 20 minutes. By that point they were 2-0 down and could not manage more than a consolation.

WAYNE HENNESSEY

The return of goalkeeper Hennessey against England was a huge boost after he missed the Slovakia win with a back problem. Hennessey provides a soothing presence.

GROUP PICTURE

All four options are still open for Wales - top, second, third or bottom. But they are the masters of their own destiny. A win against Russia will definitely take them through, and as group winners to boot if England fail to beat Slovakia. A draw could well do, too, as Slovakia would then have to beat England to deny Wales second spot. Even defeat could still see them qualify as a best third-placed team, as long as England do the business against Slovakia.



Talisman Gareth Bale.

Mourinho's United first up at Cherries in 16/17



Jose Mourinho.

CHERRIES will begin their 2016/17 season with two historic fixtures. First up they welcome Jose Mourinho as he begins life as Manchester United manager in the Premier League on the south coast at the Vitality Stadium – coincidentally his opening game at Old Trafford is against Saints. Eddie Howe's men are then the first side to play West Ham in the Premier League in the Olympic Stadium. But Bournemouth's game is far from the most eye-catching fixture on a first day of a new season that has several sub-plots. A block-busting opener between Arsenal and Liverpool at the Emirates catches the eye, while champions Leicester start at promoted Hull. New Manchester City boss and an old

adversary of Mourinho, Pep Guardiola, will have his first taste of English football at home to Sunderland. Tasty In a tasty-looking London derby, Antonio Conte's first assignment as Chelsea manager is a home game with West Ham. Two former Saints bosses go head-to-head at Goodison as new Everton manager Ronald Koeman plays host to Mauricio Pochettino's Tottenham, while new boys Burnley are at home to Swansea and Middlesbrough welcome Stoke to the Riverside. It is a show-stopping opening weekend in the Premier League and the second round of games pits last season's first against second as Leicester host Arsenal.

But although Leicester are worthy champions, plenty of fans will be heading straight for Manchester United's fixtures to see when Mourinho will come up against not only Guardiola but his old club Chelsea.

Synonymous

Mourinho and the Blues were synonymous with each other for a number of years as he won three Premier League titles at the Bridge, but after they sacked him for a second time in December, he decided it was time to manage another English club. He will return to Chelsea on October 22, with Chelsea in Manchester on April 15, while he and Guardiola meet on September 10 (Old Trafford) and February 25 (Etihad).



Rickie Lambert celebrates his last-minute penalty winner for Saints at West Bromwich Albion in August 2013.

Great chance to end poor run

SAINTS have been handed a great chance to end their opening day blues. They will host Watford on August 13 aiming to record only a fourth opening day victory in 21 years. Saints have managed three victories, eight draws and nine losses on day one in the past two decades. Their last success was a 1-0 victory against West Bromwich Albion in August 2013 - and that was down to a last minute penalty from Rickie Lambert. Prior to that, their last opening day win in the Premier League was a 1-0 triumph at Coventry in August 1999. There was a late winner that day too, Egil Olsenstad breaking the deadlock with five minutes left. Saints' only home win in the last 20 years on the opening day came in their 2011/12 Championship promotion winning season. Then they lifted the curtain on the new campaign with a 3-1 success against Leeds - Dean Hammond, Adam Lallana and David Connolly on target. Only one other top flight club has as bad a win ratio on the opening day as Saints in the past two decades. West Brom have also won three but drawn six and lost 11 of their last 20 games.



Rickie Lambert keeps a close eye on Max Gradel during Saints' opening day win against Leeds in 2011/12.

CHERRIES LEAGUE FIXTURES 2016/17

AUGUST		
13 Man United	(H)	
20 West Ham United	(A)	
27 Crystal Palace	(A)	
SEPTEMBER		
10 West Bromwich	(H)	
17 Manchester City	(A)	
24 Everton	(H)	
OCTOBER		
1 Watford	(A)	
15 Hull City	(H)	
22 Tottenham	(H)	
29 Middlesbrough	(A)	
NOVEMBER		
5 Sunderland	(H)	
19 Stoke City	(A)	
26 Arsenal	(A)	
DECEMBER		
3 Liverpool	(H)	
10 Burnley	(A)	
13 Leicester City	(H)	
17 Southampton	(H)	
26 Chelsea	(A)	
31 Swansea City	(A)	
JANUARY		
2 Arsenal	(H)	
14 Hull City	(A)	
21 Watford	(H)	
31 Crystal Palace	(H)	
FEBRUARY		
4 Everton	(A)	
11 Manchester City	(H)	
25 West Bromwich	(A)	
MARCH		
4 Manchester United	(A)	
11 West Ham United	(H)	
18 Swansea City	(H)	
APRIL		
1 Southampton	(A)	
5 Liverpool	(A)	
8 Chelsea	(H)	
15 Tottenham	(A)	
22 Middlesbrough	(H)	
29 Sunderland	(A)	
MAY		
6 Stoke City	(H)	
13 Burnley	(H)	
21 Leicester City	(A)	



SAINTS'

PREMIER 2016

AUGUST

- 13 Watford(H)
- 20 Man United(A)
- 27 Sunderland(H)

SEPTEMBER

- 10 Arsenal(A)
- 17 Swansea(H)
- 24 West Ham(A)

OCTOBER

- 1 Leicester City(A)
- 15 Burnley(H)
- 22 Man City(A)
- 29 Chelsea(H)

NOVEMBER

- 5 Hull City(A)
- 19 Liverpool(H)
- 26 Everton(H)

DECEMBER

- 3 Crystal Palace(A)
- 10 Middlesbrough(H)
- 14 Stoke City(A)
- 17 Bournemouth(A)
- 26 Tottenham(H)
- 31 West Brom(H)



FIXTURES

LEAGUE 2017

JANUARY

- 2 Everton(A)
- 14 Burnley(A)
- 21 Leicester City(H)
- 31 Swansea City(A)

FEBRUARY

- 4 West Ham United(H)
- 11 Sunderland(A)
- 25 Arsenal(H)

MARCH

- 4 Watford(A)
- 11 Manchester United(H)
- 18 Tottenham Hotspur(A)

APRIL

- 1 Bournemouth(H)
- 5 Crystal Palace(H)
- 8 West Brom(A)
- 15 Manchester City(H)
- 22 Chelsea(A)
- 29 Hull City(H)

MAY

- 6 Liverpool(A)
- 13 Middlesbrough(A)
- 21 Stoke City(H)



Non league FOOTBALL



Frontman Wort looking forward to next campaign



Lee Wort

LEE Wort is relishing the prospect of National League South football after becoming the first summer signing of Poole Town boss Tom Killick.

Frontman Wort spent two months on loan at Tatnam from Gosport Borough last term and scored two goals in seven Southern League Premier Division appearances.

The 24-year-old ended the season at the club where he made his name, Sholing, in the Sydenhams Wessex League's top flight.

Now he has now made a permanent switch to the Dolphins and cannot wait for the upcoming campaign to begin.

The prolific Southampton-based marksman told The (Bournemouth) Daily Echo: "When I went on loan to Poole last season I really enjoyed my time there and got on really well with everyone.

"I liked the way the club did things and the way everything was set up. "The club had plenty of ambi-

tion and the fact they subsequently achieved promotion proved that.

"I'm really glad I'm going to be a part of Poole's first season in National South."

Poole's elevation from the Southern League – sealed by a 3-0 home win over Dunstable – was the fourth promotion of Killick's 12-year spell at the helm.

Securing the title allowed the Dolphins to return to non-League's second tier after a 25-year absence.

A marker laid down

LAVERSTOCK & Ford have laid down a marker for next season by signing Graham Mankin from higher-division neighbours Bemerton Heath Harlequins.

Mankin was one of only a handful of local players to remain with the Harlequins last season following the departure of former boss Ian Chalk.

He played 28 games for Graham Kemp's new-look Sydenhams Premier side, scoring seven goals.

Mankin joins a Laverstock outfit who finished fifth in Sydenhams One and hope to push for honours next term.

● **HAVANT & Waterlooville** boss Lee Bradbury has signed a second striker from Bognor Regis Town.

Following the capture of Jason Prior, he has raided the Rocks again for young former Moneyfields frontman Alfie Rutherford.

The son of ex-Moneys boss Miles, young Rutherford was an academy player at Portsmouth.

He had a number of clubs chasing him, but has opted to renew his strike partnership with Prior that yielded over 60 goals last term.

Havant were relegated from the National League South and will be joining Bognor in the Isthmian Premier Division.

● **SALISBURY FC** Supporters' Club have made a £4,000 donation to the promoted Sydenhams Premier Division champions.

The cheque was handed over at SFCSC's AGM by newly-elected chairman Gordon Plumb and treasurer Bob Erskine.

Club CEO Amanda Newbery said: "I know the directors are extremely grateful to the Supporters' Club for this generous donation that is already being put to good use with urgent pre-season work to the pitch and floodlight lamp replacement ahead of the new season.

"The work that is done by the Supporters' Club is hugely important to Salisbury FC and very much appreciated."



Graham Mankin, left

Ex-boss hoping Wort can put Gosport problem behind him

Diaper thinks this coming season is 'pivotal' for player

SHOLING boss Dave Diaper believes the 2016/17 season will be pivotal in Lee Wort's career.

In Diaper's opinion the last two years have been "wasted" ones for the 24-year-old St Mary's hotshot who has yet to truly prove himself at a higher level.

But he is hoping that Wort – a free-scoring product of Sholing's youth system – can quickly put his Gosport Borough nightmare behind him and flourish at his new club Poole Town.

Having spearheaded Sholing to an FA Vase/Sydenhams Premier double in 2014, Wort spent the best part of two years at Gosport without ever cementing a regular first-team spot for Alex Pike's National League South side.

In his first season at Privett Park, his opportunities were limited by the outstanding frontline partnership of Justin Bennett and ex-Saint Matt Paterson.

Last season he had a spell on loan at Poole, scoring two goals in seven impressive appearances for the eventual Southern Premier Division champions.

He eventually left Gosport in March when they ran into financial problems and returned to his spiritual home Sholing to get some games under his belt at the tail end of the Sydenhams Premier campaign.

"Worty coming back to us was about him getting his fitness up rather than going shopping at weekends!" smiled Diaper. "It was always going to be the case that he would be moving on again and I'm pleased for him that he's signed for Tom Killick.

"It was important that he moved to the right club and these are exciting days at Poole.

"He's tested the waters there before and I saw in the paper that Tom (Killick) said Worty was even better than he thought he was.



Poole Town manager Tom Killick.

"That's the thing about Worty. He's got skills as well as scoring attributes and can turn a tight game in the blink of an eye.

"At Gosport he was watching more games than he was playing which stalled his career. He wasted a couple of years really. This is going to be a really big season for Worty. It's important he kicks on."

Even in the short time Wort was back with Sholing, his old influence as talisman rubbed off.

Despite having to wade through a hefty backlog of fixtures, the Boatmen saw off hot competition from Blackfield & Langley and Andover Town to clinch runners-up spot behind runaway Wessex champions Salisbury.

Worty missed three or four games through injury, but he got his fitness levels up and we had a terrific end to the season," said Diaper. "I'm not saying Worty was the reason for that, but he certainly helped towards it.

"It's good to see players like him given the opportunity to play higher."

Non league FOOTBALL



Jim Brady

Sholing secures new sponsorship

SHOLING will be striving for long-term sustainability before contemplating another promotion from the Sydenhams Wessex League.

They took a big step in the right direction last week when Portswood-based company Universal Plumbing Supplies (UPS) were unveiled as new stadium sponsors.

And, with a first-team shirt sponsor and a fund-raising golf day in the pipeline, the Portsmouth Road outfit are plotting to make giant strides forward with the backing of the area's business community.

Welcoming Jim Brady of UPS on board, team boss Dave Diaper said: "Jim's a great guy and he's buying into what we are trying to achieve."

"When you don't apply for promotion it looks like you lack ambition, but that's not the case."

"But, when you do go up, you need to make sure you go up and stay up and we can only do that if we've got local businesses behind us."

Sholing have twice ventured into the Southern League, only to come back down again, and Diaper wants to make sure that the next time it's for keeps.

● Sholing's inaugural golf day is booked for Friday, October 7, at Romsey Golf Club.

There are spaces for 20 teams of four. For more details and to book a place, contact Ian Ritchie on 07768 588526 or at ian.ritchie5@openworld.com.

Reserves set to join ranks

THE inclusion of Weymouth Reserves in Sydenhams One next season has given AFC Totton boss Steve Hollick food for thought.

Providing the proposed constitution gets the go-ahead at Tuesday's SWL AGM, Southern Premier Division outfit Weymouth will become the first club to field a reserve side in the Wessex senior ranks.

Hollick, whose Totton outfit play a league below Weymouth in the Southern One South & West, said: "It's interesting for us."

"What's to stop us putting our reserves in the Hampshire Premier League, getting promoted and then being in the same division as (Sydenhams One neighbours) Totton & Eling?"

"There are several clubs in our league whose reserves play in the Hellenic League and we want our reserves to be playing Step 6 football."

"For players to progress through the reserves, they need to be playing at that level."

"We've got to think hard about what we're going to do now."

"Weymouth Reserves going into the Wessex League will open up a can of worms."

The 29th Annual General Meeting of the Sydenhams Football League (Wessex) takes place this Tuesday, June 21 (7.30pm), at Totton Sports Club.

The proposed constitution for 2016/17 sees the Premier Division bumped back up to 22 teams with relegated Southern League outfit Bashley replacing promoted Salisbury, Portland United and Amesbury Town climbing up from Division One and Folland Sports going the other way.

If clubs okay it, Alresford Town, who finished second-to-bottom of Premier ranks, will be reprieved from the drop.

Division One will expand from 18 to 21 teams, buoyed by new additions Baffins Milton Rovers, Hamble Club, Shaftesbury Town and Weymouth Reserves.

Premier Division: AFC Portchester, Alresford Town, Amesbury Town, Andover Town, Bashley, Bemerton Heath Harlequins, Blackfield & Langley, Bournemouth Poppies, Brockenhurst, Cowes Sports, Fareham Town, Fawley AFC, Hamworthy Utd, Horndean, Lymington Town, Moneyfields, Newport IoW, Portland Utd, Sholing, Team Solent, Verwood Town, Whitchurch Utd.
Division One: AFC Stoneham, Alton Town, Andover New Street, Baffins Milton Rovers, Christchurch, Downton, East Cowes Vics, Fleet Spurs, Folland Sports, Hamble Club, Hythe & Dibden, Laverstock & Ford, New Milton Town, Pewsey Vale, Ringwood Town, Romsey Town, Shaftesbury Town, Tadley Calvea, Totton & Eling, US Portsmouth, Weymouth Reserves.



Steve Hollick.

Boss Diaper believes young talent will shine for Sholing

Mouland signs and Marc Diaper rejoins Boatmen

SHOLING have signed frontman Zac Mouland and welcomed manager's son Marc Diaper back to the newly-named Universal Stadium.

But after finishing a fine second to Salisbury in the Sydenhams Premier Division last term, team boss Dave Diaper does not anticipate a flood of summer arrivals.

He is convinced the Boatmen's latest crop of youngsters will be ready to thrive in 2016/17 having successfully dipped their toes into Wessex waters last term.

"We're looking strong," he said. "To have finished last season in the manner we did was tremendous and we should hit the ground running."

"A big club is measured not just by its first team but by all the teams within that club – and that makes us a massive club locally."

"A lot of managers say they will give an opportunity to youth, but at Sholing we actually do it and the proof's in the pudding."

"We start training on June 23 and there will be four or five players from other Premier Division clubs joining us (on trial)."

"But, really, we did a lot of the hard work last year, bringing the youngsters in, so we're well set up for this season."

New recruit Mouland, who is coming up for 20, came through the AFC Totton youth ranks and again caught Diaper's eye playing for Wessex rivals Lymington Town.

"It's important to keep things competitive and I've been keeping tabs on Zac for a while now."

"He's a good lad with a good attitude and a great character – we hit it off straight away," said Diaper.

"When I spoke to Zac he had a feeling he wouldn't get into our team but, from what I've seen, he's



Zac Mouland in action for AFC Totton in 2014

certainly good enough to compete for a place."

Diaper's son, Marc, returns to the Sholing family after a two-year absence. Following a season out of football, he spent last term in the Southern One South & West with AFC Totton.

A member of the Boatmen's FA Vase/Sydenhams Premier double-winning side of 2013/14, he will bring valued experience at left-back, but his primary role will be to support his dad on the

management team. "It's a long season and history tells you it can drain you, so it's important to have people like Marc on board with me and (assistant) Stu Hussey," said Diaper.

"Marc's job been a problem to him (commitment-wise) and it will be again with us, but he's signed on and he will be good to have around the changing room as part of the management and coaching team."

"Marc, like Stu, has a wealth of experience to pass on to the

younger members of the squad and this can only be good for the future of Sholing."

"He'll be good (playing) back-up. I still have not seen a full-back who can switch the play with a diag (diagonal) as good as him and he will provide good cover for the defence now that Dean Faithfull has decided to take a break from playing."

Sholing are in need of a new physio to replace Tasha Bowers, who no longer has the time to devote to the job.

Non league FOOTBALL



Tim Sills.

Sills quits Terras after failing to agree new pay deal

TIM Sills has left his post as player/assistant manager of Southern Premier outfit Weymouth.

The Romsey-born former Basingstoke, Aldershot and Torquay forward – a member of Gosport Borough's FA Trophy final side of 2014 – failed to agree personal terms for the 2016/17 campaign.

Manager Jason Matthews explained: "Tim and I were in negotiation for probably five or six weeks and we couldn't come to an agreement that was right for

both parties. I want to put on record my thanks to Tim. I feel he was a fantastic assistant and brought loads to the table. He will be sorely missed.

"Obviously our loss is someone else's gain. I can't speak highly enough of Tim.

"I have had him in the squad for two years and he is what you would class as a model pro.

"He had to look after himself, I'm fully aware of that and that's what's happened.

"It is really disappointing. I was really hoping Tim would stay.

"But I have to work within a budget and, unfortunately, Tim felt his worth was a little more than I could offer him."

Following Sills' departure, midfielder Mark Molesley has signed a new one-year deal for the Terras and will become player/coach at the Bob Lucas Stadium next season.

Molesley, 35, boasts Football League experience with AFC Bournemouth, Exeter, Plymouth and Aldershot.

Hester at Wimborne

NEW Wimborne Town boss Matty Holmes says the rise of Paddy Hester is long overdue.

The 23-year-old ex-Cherries youngster has been drafted into Holmes' Southern One South & West squad after playing more than 100 times across four seasons for Wessex outfit Hamworthy United.

"I'm really pleased to get Paddy," said ex-Cherries star Holmes, who previously worked for the AFC Bournemouth academy.

"I remember him from Bournemouth, particularly his time as a first-year professional," he recalled.

"He played a number of reserve matches and I have always followed his progress with interest.

"I watched him at Hamworthy United a couple of seasons ago and always felt he should have been playing higher.

"I know his work commitments have dictated a few things in the past, but it was a no-brainer for me.

"He's a lovely left-sided player who can also play in central positions. He adds real quality to our squad."

Transfer

SAM Lanahan has left Blackfield & Langley to join Gosport Borough's summer signing spree.

The 24-year-old ex-Dorchester Town player scored 24 goals in 31 appearances for Sydenhams Wessex Premier outfit Blackfield last term, helping them to a third-place finish.

Now Borough boss Alex Pike is backing him to succeed in the Vanarama National League South.

A former Yeovil Town academy player, attacking midfielder Lanahan signed for Dorchester in November 2013 from Pike's former club Hamworthy United and went on to play Conference South and Southern Premier football.

He reluctantly left the Magpies last summer after starting a new teaching job in Salisbury.



Paddy Hester

Brown hopes academy trio's call-up will be an inspiration

Dragons boss to build young side for new season

BASINGSTOKE Town boss Terry Brown hopes the signing of three of the club's academy players will inspire other local youngsters to follow in their footsteps.

The trio – striker Aaron Jarvis, who shone last season on a dual-signing at Whitchurch United, midfielder George Bennett and forward George Hallahan – all impressed in the final two games of last season with Stoke already facing relegation from the National League South.

Brown now intends to build a younger squad in the Southern Premier Division, making full use of the club's academy, run by former first-team boss Jason Bristow.

Brown said: "The way things are set up now there is a path from the academy team to the first team.

"I hope other local players will be pulling on a first-team shirt in the future.

Important job

"Jason (Bristow) is doing an important job with the academy, making sure we have quality players coming through.

"Next season we are going full-time and I will be looking to train with 20 players each day.

"If injuries leave me short, there will be the chance for academy players to train with first team. I hope this will show them what they need to aspire to."

Of the triple signing of Jarvis, Bennett and Hallahan, Brown added: "All three proved last season they could play at this level, even if it was only for a couple of games."

Town will make their first ever trip to Ryman League Division One side Guernsey for a pre-season friendly on July 30.

It will be their final outing before the start of the Southern Premier



Terry Brown

campaign.

Pre-season training starts on Monday, June 27, by which time Brown hopes to have recruited half his squad.

He will, however, leave a number of spots open.

The wily former Aldershot and AFC

Wimbledon boss said: "If I was coming into this as a rookie, I would sign the whole of my squad by the start of pre-season, but I know more players will become available in July."

One new addition is centre-half Mark Hastings, a 19-year-old from Frimley Green who has been playing

for Alhaurin in the Spanish third division.

Brown said: "Mark is a player who likes to play physical and dominate. What impressed me was he went to Spain himself and made it work and I think he will be a good addition to the squad."

Non league FOOTBALL



Gary Bailey

Buckler will be given time to recover

PORTLAND United boss Gary Bailey says that new signing Sam Buckler will be given as much time as he needs to recover from a double leg break.

The former Bridport defender has signed forms for Portland, newly promoted as Sydenhams Division One champions.

Double break

He has been out of action since January, having broken both his

right tibia and fibula going in for a tackle against Odd Down.

Buckler has signed for the Blues with the ambition of taking part in pre-season, but Bailey said: "We're not going to rush him and put any pressure on him to be fit."

"He comes highly recommended."

"Everyone I have spoken with has said he's a good player."

"He will be joining up with the players in pre-season, but on a different time scale. We've got to do

what is right for Sam."

Buckler became Portland's third summer signing from Bridport, following the arrival of winger Jamie Beasley and the experienced Darren Watts.

Assistant

Bailey has also appointed former Bridport interim boss Mark Carter as his assistant manager in readiness for the forthcoming Sydenhams Premier season.

NLD set to return for seventh season

FOLLOWING another successful event last year, Non-League Day (NLD) will return for a seventh consecutive season on Saturday, September 3, 2016. As always, it falls on a day when the Premier League and Championship have no fixtures and this year's date has the added bonus of not coinciding with any international matches for the home nations.

NLD, a non-profit-making and volunteer-run initiative, encourages supporters of professional clubs to use their free Saturday to experience a non-League game.

● VANARAMA have extended their sponsorship of The National League (formerly Football Conference).

The new deal will be a 12-month rolling contract which will see them continue at least for a fourth year up to June 2018.

Andy Alderson, Vanarama MD, said: "The rebrand exercise taken by The National League 12 months ago has, in part, helped our own brand image grow in and outside our industry."

Risen

"Our profile and recognition has risen beyond our expectations. We look forward to continuing to work closely with everyone connected with the league and our early decision to extend to 2018 validates how partnerships can flourish if the mix is right".

Charlie Clapham, National League vice-chairman, commented: "Since Vanarama joined with us two seasons ago our partnership – and, above all else, our friendship – has grown and this news was a massive boost to everyone."

"Thanks to Andy and all his wonderful staff".



New Street 'get their man' in appointing boss Hutchings

Chairman 'more than happy' with the new manager

ANDOVER New Street chief Glen Butterfield says the club have "got their man" after appointing Dean Hutchings as first-team manager.

The former Stockbridge boss accepted the role at the Sydenhams One outfit following Paul Reidy's recent resignation.

Butterfield, New Street's football chairman, told The Pink's sister paper *The Andover Advertiser*: "We are more than happy to get Dean into the club."

"I've known him a long time because he used to play for me when I was a manager."

"I've kept an eye on him and I liked what he was trying to achieve at Stockbridge and his style of football. "He was our number one target."

Talking about out-going manager Paul Reidy, Butterfield added: "Paul did a fantastic job over the last two years."

"I personally felt he was stepping down too soon and felt he would have had a bit more success if he had kept going."

"But he said that the time was right and you have to respect that."

"He's still going to be involved with the club and I will still be working with him closely."

New Street finished third-to-bottom of Sydenhams One last season collecting 28 points from 34 games.

Popular coach Reidy, who had been first-team boss for two seasons, said: "It will be nice to have a break."

"I've got a few other things going on, but I will still be involved with the club and want to help them push on."

"It's not been a bad season," he added.

"We started really well and even picked up the league's club-of-the-month."

"But when you can't get a settled side it is difficult."

"We don't pay our players, so it is



New Andover New Street boss Dean Hutchings

hard because they have work and other commitments which didn't help."

● DIAMOND National Soccer Schools are desperately looking for players for their new venture at the Goals Soccer Centre in Millbrook, Southampton.

There are vacancies for under-8s, under-10s and under-12s for which they have development squads running now and elite squads as from September for the traineeship programme.

Training takes place on Mondays and Thursdays, 5.30-7pm.

As from July, Diamond NSS are also starting a new youth league at Goals on Saturday mornings for seven to 12-year-olds. This is a 'pay and play' league open to clubs or individual teams.

More details from Christopher Parry at chrisgrsocc13@yahoo.co.uk.

Non league FOOTBALL



Dillon in his Eastleigh days

Magpies boss backs Dillon to bounce back to form

CHRIS Dillon had an indifferent season by his own high standards for Dorchester Town last term.

But Magpies' boss Mark Jermyn is backing the former Eastleigh man to improve in 2016/17 and is delighted the ex-Spittire has resigned for the Southern Premier club.

Dillon, a member of Eastleigh's Conference South-winning squad of 2013/14, has joined the likes of club captain Jake Smeeton, vice-captain Nathan Walker and reliable defender Neil Martin in

committing to a further season at The Avenue Stadium.

"His signing is a massive boost," said Jermyn.

"Chris is out to prove that he can have a better season than he did last year.

Glitch

"I don't think, even by Chris's own standards, it was his best season last year.

"We want him to stay because he is a good player. Everyone has a glitch in their career and we expect him, next

season, to bounce back from it.

"We've managed to keep the majority of last year's squad together and now, on paper, we are looking much healthier than we did two weeks ago.

"We're sticking to what we know and we know who works well."

Jermyn has also stated that he will play a role on the field, as well as off it, next term.

The player-manager was a big part of many of last year's positive results as the Magpies finished 13th.

Evesham to stay

AFC TOTTON, Salisbury and Winchester City will now be putting Evesham United into their sat navs once again next season.

The FA have overturned their original decision to uproot the Robins from the Southern One South & West to the Northern Premier League Division One South.

Evesham were in danger of becoming the fall guys when South & West champions Cinderford dropped the bombshell news that they could not accept promotion due to the cost of travelling to away games.

The raging Robins lodged an appeal, arguing that a move to the Northern Premier League would cost them upwards of £25,000 in additional travelling and loss of revenue from local games.

They were particularly incensed that, had Cinderford remained in the South & West, it would be them rather than Evesham benefitting from crowd magnets Hereford and Salisbury being promoted to the S&W.

Evesham chairman Jim Cockerton went as far as to suggest Cinderford had "cheated" and called for them to be kicked out of the league.

The FA's decision, however, was to restore the status quo and place Cinderford in the Southern Premier against their wishes.

The clubs affected will revert to the original allocations as follows: Cinderford Town, Southern League Premier; Corby Town, Northern Premier League Premier; Stamford, Northern Premier League Division One South; Evesham United, Southern League Division One South & West.

The saga has upset Stamford who had been told they would be reprieved from relegation, having finished 21st in the NPL Premier.

Their chairman Bob Feetham said: "This is absolutely devastating. There hasn't even been a phone call, or an apology.

"I also note that we have no right of appeal. Some democracy!"



Evesham United

Winsper follows teammate in search of regular football

Midfielder makes decision to drop two divisions

MIDFIELDER Luke Winsper has followed his former Weymouth teammate Sam Poole to Blackfield & Langley.

Winsper left the Terras last month in search of regular first-team football, having been forced to play a bit-part role following a metatarsal injury sustained at Bashley in 2014.

Just as defender Poole did last summer, he is dropping down two divisions from the Southern Premier to bolster Blackfield's challenge for Sydenhams Premier honours.

On leaving Weymouth, Winsper explained "I spoke to Jase (Weymouth player-manager Jason Matthews) and he wanted me to stay, but I said I needed to play first-team football week in, week out.

"Because of my injuries I haven't been doing that and I know it would be tough to get that at Weymouth. I feel I need to move somewhere else to get that run of games.

"It's not the money side of things or anything like that, I just need to play football.

"Jase completely understands what I said. I love the club and had been there for five or six years.

"You never know, if I get that run of games after a couple of seasons away, if Jase is still in charge he may say to come back.

"I have made some friends I will never lose contact with and that's the main thing for me."

Terras boss Matthews understood Winsper's reasons for going.

"I couldn't promise him first-team football on a regular basis and that's what he wanted," said the former Eastleigh goalkeeper.

"We would like to have kept him around.

"He has been a great servant on very little money and I can't speak highly enough of him.

"The problem with his foot took so long to clear up completely and that



Luke Winsper (centre) gets a shot away for Weymouth.

was probably why we couldn't get him in. We will be sad to see him go because he is a great lad as well."

An enthusiastic Winsper tweeted: "Happy to have signed for @bandlfc can't wait to get started!"

Blackfield, third in the Sydenhams Premier last season, will begin pre-season training on Saturday, July 2 (10am) at Gang Warily.

● MICHELMERSH & Timsbury have spent a busy closed season organising friendlies.

They kick off at the start of next month when an M&T XI will host Fordingbridge Turks (July 2, 3pm), Boyatt Wood Wanderers (July 7, 7pm) and Hamble Club Reserves (July 9, 3pm) all at Hatches Farm.

A full Michelmersh first team will then take on Bush Hill (away, July 16, 2pm, Test Park),

Folland Sports (home, July 19, 7pm, Hatches Farm), QK Southampton (away, July 23, 3pm, Lordshill), Totton & Eling (home, July 30, 3pm, Hatches Farm), Gulf Western (home, August 4, 7pm, Hatches Farm) and Comrades (home, August 6, 3pm, Hatches Farm.)

M&T Reserves play QK Southampton Res (July 23, 12 noon, Lordshill), Totton & Eling Res (July 30, 12 noon, Hatches Farm), Braishfield (August 2, 7pm, Hatches Farm) and Comrades Reserves (August 6, 12 noon, Hatches Farm.)

Non league FOOTBALL



Big night

SHIPTON Bellinger Rams FC enjoyed a big night out at St Mary's. The club, who sit close to the Hampshire-Wiltshire border, received a Hampshire FA Fair Play Award at the HFA presentation night.

A growing club, Shipton Bellinger cater for all age-groups from under-9s through to adults. Pictured (left to right) are Jordan Wylie (sponsor), Sean Board (manager), Craig Bain (club captain) and Kevin Watts (manager). Missing is another sponsor, Ray Ferguson.

Friendlies round-up

BROCKENHURST begin pre-season training next week at Brockenhurst College.

The Sydenhams Premier Division outfit will be put through their paces on June 21 and June 23, continuing every Tuesday and Thursday thereafter.

The majority of last season's squad have already re-signed, but the Badgers would welcome extra players for their first team, newly-created development squad (Wyvern Combination League) and freshly-launched under-18s (Hampshire Youth League).

The club will kick off their pre-season campaign with a trip to US Portsmouth on July 9, followed by Hythe & Dibden (home, July 16), Laverstock & Ford (away, July 19) and AFC Totton (home, July 26).

PRE-SEASON FRIENDLIES 2016

Tuesday, July 5: AFC Stoneham v Eastleigh
Thursday, July 7: Banbury Utd v Eastleigh

Saturday, July 9: Alton Town v AFC Totton, Salisbury v Bristol Rovers (1.00), US Portsmouth v Brockenhurst, Winchester City v Alresford Town.

Tuesday, July 12: Andover Town v AFC Totton, Chichester City v Salisbury, Winchester City v Basingstoke Town.

Wednesday, July 13: Hamilton Academical v Eastleigh

Saturday, July 16: Basingstoke Town v Salisbury, Brockenhurst v Hythe & Dibden, Bush Hill v Michelmersh & Timsbury (Test Park, 2.00), East Kilbride v Eastleigh, Newport IoW v AFC Totton, Sutton Common Rovers v Alresford Town, Winchester City v Gosport Borough.

Tuesday, July 19: Bemerton HH v Poole Town, Fleet Town v Winchester City, Michelmersh & Timsbury v Folland Sports (7.00), Laverstock & Ford v Brockenhurst, Salisbury v Portsmouth (7.00), Weymouth v Eastleigh

Thursday, July 21: Bemerton HH v Winchester City, Downton v Salisbury XI (7.30)
Friday, July 22: Eastleigh v Poole Town.

Saturday, July 23: Moneyfields v Winchester City, QK Southampton v Michelmersh & Timsbury.

Tuesday, July 26: Brockenhurst v AFC Totton, Eastleigh v Barnet, Salisbury v Yeovil Town (7.30)

Wednesday, July 27: Winchester City v Sholing.

Saturday, July 30: Eastleigh v Northampton Town, Michelmersh & Timsbury v Totton & Eling, Salisbury v Weymouth, Winchester City v Godalming.

Tuesday, August 2: Winchester City v Blackfield

Stags boss advises players to 'leave your comfort zone'

Southern League 'needs few more' to step up a level

STEVE Hollick is convinced more Wessex footballers could – and should – follow Neil Williams' footsteps into the Southern League.

Williams' reward for an outstanding debut season in the Southern One South & West was to agree another year with the Stags this week, writes Wendy Gee.

Not only is he a real inspiration for any Wessex player contemplating stepping up a league, but the striker-turned-midfielder is proof that it is never too late to tap into your true potential.

Stags boss Hollick said: "Willo was a real unsung hero for us last year. He'd never played in the Southern League before.

"He took a while to settle but he really came on strong towards the end of the season and established himself as a Southern League footballer.

"He's in his early 30s, but Willo's as fit as a fiddle and he's chipped in with some vital goals.

"He's done the rounds in the Wessex League with Bemerton and Blackfield and he's a good example of why players should come out of their comfort zone and try the Southern League.

"His all-round play and the way he's conducted himself has been excellent and he's been brilliant to work with. He was fantastic after Christmas with his work-rate."

Much as Hollick appreciates the attractions of the Sydenhams Wessex League, he said: "We need a couple more like Neil Williams to come and give the Southern League a go.

"I understand that the Wessex is a good league and a nice, comfortable



Totton's Neil Williams goes for goal against Bridgwater last season

place to be, but it's a different challenge travelling to the West Country to pit your wits against lads you don't know."

With influential centre-back Patrick Wilson also re-signing this week,

Hollick is close to getting the bulk of last season's squad tied up for 2016/17.

Wilson has become a popular figure at the Testwood Stadium since transferring from Wimborne Town mid-

way through last season. Talks are still ongoing with young midfielders Jack Alexander and Jake Burgess and there are plans to bring in some new faces once pre-season gets under way.

Non league FOOTBALL



EASTLEIGH'S 2016 Fun Day promises to be the biggest and best yet. The free-entry event, on Saturday, July 9, will be jointly opened by the Mayor and Mayoress of Eastleigh, Councillor Des Scott and Mrs Ve Scott, and the club's much-loved founder Derik Brooks.

The day will include the launching of the Spitfires' new kit for the 2016/17 Vanarama National League season and an over-50s walking football tournament. As always there will be a host of family fun and attractions, including The Crestwood Steel Band, a vintage fire engine, hog roast and BBQ, bouncy

castles and inflatables, stalls and traders, and the UK Garrison Star Wars Stormtroopers.

● Doors open at 12 noon at Eastleigh's Silverlake Stadium, Stoneham Lane. Admission free.

Spitfires land young striker

.. Todd rebuilding goes on and on

WITH the great and good of European football assembled in France this summer, you wouldn't have thought news of a non-League signing would get a look-in on the other side of the Channel.

But Mikael Mandron's arrival at the Silverlake Stadium did not go unnoticed in his country of birth, writes Wendy Gee.

A post appeared on French Touch FC's twitter feed, stating "Barré à Sunderland, Mikael Mandron a été libéré et rejoint Eastleigh (D5 anglaise)."

Loosely translated it means Mandron has been released by Sunderland and joined Eastleigh in the fifth tier of English football.

Mandron was the most high-profile of four young players let go by Sunderland at the end of last season.

Much had been expected of the young Frenchman when he was handed his Black Cats debut in April 2013 by then coach Paolo Di Canio.

He had been an ever-present for the under-21s, having arrived at the Stadium of Light as a 16-year-old after impressing in the lower French leagues.

But his four-minute cameo in a 6-1 defeat at Aston Villa was the first of only three first-team appearances, all from the bench.

His final run-out came in a Premier League game at Liverpool in January 2015 and, between times, he had spells on loan at Fleetwood Town, Shrewsbury and Hartlepool United.

Mandron's first goal in senior foot-



Mikael Mandron and, inset, Connor Essam.

ball came for Fleetwood against York City and he scored a sweet volley for Hartlepool in an FA Cup second round replay win against Salford City.

At 6ft 3in tall and just 21 years old, Boulogne-born Mandron is the second hungry young striker to have been snapped by Eastleigh in the space of a week.

He joins jet-heeled 23-year-old Scott Wilson, plucked from National League South outfit Weston-super-Mare.

It signals a change in direction for Eastleigh whose three main front-men last season - James Constable, Jack Midson and Yemi Odubade - were all around the 30-mark.

Main man Constable and Odubade

are still with the club, giving Todd a rich blend of youth and experience, power and pace, to choose from.

After landing Mandron on a two-year contract, Todd smiled: "I am absolutely delighted to capture Mikael."

"He is another young talent who has unbelievable potential and I'm positive he will become a firm favourite with fans."

Mandron's arrival came shortly after Eastleigh had welcomed another defender into the arrivals lounge.

And, at just 23 years of age, centre-back Connor Essam is yet another young player with massive potential - plus a good deal of experience under his belt.

Born in Chatham, Kent, he progressed through Gillingham's youth ranks and went on to impress for Crawley Town and Dover Athletic - whom he captained - before signing for Leyton Orient last summer.

Released

He made 26 appearances for the League Two outfit before falling out of favour with new boss Kevin Nolan.

Essam re-joined Dover on loan in late March, helping Chris Kinnear's troops in the run-in to the play-offs.

He was released by the Os when his one-year contract expired.

"We're delighted to add Connor to the team," said Spitfires chairman Stewart Donald.

"He's an experienced, young defender who comes to us with great pedigree."

"We've once again added quality to the strength and depth of our squad and the competition for places is definitely exciting."

Essam tweeted: "Pleased to sign for @eastleighfc ambitious club going in the right direction, can't wait to get started."

Kane not able at Euro 2016

ENGLAND striker Harry Kane has yet to find his form at Euro 2016.

The Tottenham striker was top scorer in the Premier League last season but has been ineffective so far for the Three Lions.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at why the 22-year-old looks lost in France.

FORM

Kane plundered 25 Premier League goals last season to claim the Golden Boot. Yet he scored just one goal in Tottenham's final four matches as their title bid fell away. Kane was on target in England's friendly against Turkey but drew a blank against Portugal and is yet to find the net at Euro 2016.

GOAL THREAT

Kane had one shot on target against Russia and none against Wales, although one header was blocked by the arm of Spurs team-mate Ben Davies. He had two shots off target against the Russians and one against Wales, a wild free-kick which flew 10 yards over the crossbar, before he was hauled off at half-time with Jamie Vardy and Daniel Sturridge sent on.

LINK-UP PLAY

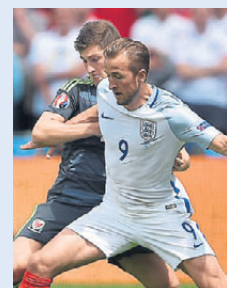
It's not all about goals, obviously, and Kane is a modern number nine who loves to bring his team-mates into play. However, his pass completion rate against Russia was a very poor 64 per cent - the next lowest England outfield player was Kyle Walker's 81 per cent. Against Wales he managed an improved 78 per cent but that success rate was still the second lowest of the starting XI, behind Raheem Sterling (67 per cent), who was also sacrificed at half-time.

FATIGUE?

Kane has not had a break in two years having played for England's Under-21s last summer. He played 4,611 minutes for Tottenham last season, the most of any forward in the England squad (Wayne Rooney was next on 3,788 minutes, Jamie Vardy played 3,597). Chris Smalling (5,472) played the most minutes of anyone at Euro 2016 while Nathaniel Clyne (5,213), Eric Dier (4,680) and Joe Hart (4,677) also have more miles on the clock.

PROSPECTS

With Vardy grabbing the equaliser against Wales and Sturridge hitting the stoppage-time winner, not to mention Marcus Rashford's eye-catching cameo, Kane could have few complaints if he found himself on the bench when England bid to secure their place in the knockout stages against Slovakia on Monday night.



Harry Kane, right.

The 'Hand of God' goal ... 30 years on



Diego Maradona takes on Terry Butcher and Peter Shilton on his way to scoring Argentina's second goal. Right - Maradona with Bryan Robson at Wembley in 1988.

Diego will never say 'sorry'. For him, it was payback time

A life of extremes

DIEGO Maradona's entire life has been a story of extremes.

Argentinian hero or a national disgrace?

Genius footballer or overweight drug addict?

Man of the people or tax-dodging celebrity?

For some, he is the greatest player in history - a man who almost single-handedly carried his nation to World Cup glory. To others, he is a cheat.

On June 22, 1986, he was both, on the biggest stage, just four minutes apart.

His second goal against England in a World Cup quarter-final was arguably the best ever scored - a 60-metre slalom through half the England team before slotting the ball in - his first in sport's most controversial sleight of hand.

Payback

Maradona has never apologised for punching the ball into England's net but how could he? He is not sorry. For him, the "Hand of God" goal was not cheating, it was cunning.

It was also payback.

Played under a broiling Mexican sun, in front of 114,000 fans at the Estadio Azteca, against a backdrop of a 20-year football feud and only four years after the Falklands War, England against Argentina in a quarter-final was always going to be heated.

The first half certainly looked hot and bothered, particularly for England's players, as both teams struggled with the heat.

Bobby Robson's England had reached this stage thanks to two good wins over Poland and Paraguay, after their customary slow start, while Argentina had strolled to the last eight, thanks to their captain Maradona, already the world's most expensive footballer twice over.

But this was always going to be more than just a match between two



Argentina's Diego Maradona, left, beats England's Peter Shilton to the ball to score the infamous 'Hand of God' goal.

of the World Cup's bigger beasts.

Any goodwill Argentina had once felt towards England for bringing football to South America with its railway engineers in the late 19th century had evaporated by 1986.

Despite the bridge-building efforts of Spurs' Argentinian imports Ossie Ardiles and Ricky Villa, the build-up to the game was dominated by memories of a bad-tempered encounter in the last eight of the 1966 World Cup and the 1982 Falklands conflict.

The former was remembered in Argentina for their captain Antonio Rattin's red card and England boss Sir Alf Ramsey calling them "animals"; the latter remembered for a

humiliating defeat.

So when Maradona's one-two combination knocked England out, there was not a soul in Argentina worried that the first blow was below the proverbial belt.

Maradona's post-match explanation of what happened with his first goal is perhaps the most fitting description of the entire game - he beat the big, lumbering bullies from the Old World "a little with his head and a little with the hand of God".

England's players, of course, see it differently and the likes of goalkeeper Peter Shilton and Chris Waddle were still seething last year when the ever-cheeky Maradona met the

Tunisian who refereed the game, Ali Bin Nasser, and gave him one of his football shirts signed "to my eternal friend".

Four minutes later, Maradona scored the "goal of the century". Maradona would go on to score two more epic goals in the semi-final against Belgium and then lift Argentina's second World Cup in eight years after a 3-2 win over West Germany. He was a unanimous choice for the player of the tournament.

Recent years have seen financial and health problems, a tempestuous spell as Argentina manager and a reinvention as a talk-show host and cheerleader for left-wing politics.

What they said in 1986 ...

THIRTY years on from Diego Maradona's hugely controversial 'Hand of God' goal in the World Cup quarter-final against England, the Sports Pink looks at the reactions and reflections on the incident from the main protagonists in the match.

"A little with the head of Maradona and a little with the hand of God" - Maradona's own account of which part of his body he had touched the ball with during media interviews after the match.

"At what point was he offside? Or was it a use of a hand that England were complaining about?" - BBC commentator Barry Davies was uncertain what had happened in the immediate aftermath of the incident.

"I was waiting for my teammates to embrace me, and no one came... I told them, 'Come hug me, or the referee isn't going to allow it.'" - Maradona.

"It wasn't the hand of God, it was the hand of a rascal" - Sir Bobby Robson, the England manager.

"It's a game which has huge symbolic value, Maradona showed the two sides of being an Argentinian. The first goal shows the deceit, the creole cunning and the sharpness. Argentina is a place where deceit has more prestige than honesty. But it also has another face and that is one of virtue and ability. With the second goal Maradona crowns the match as a work of art," - Jorge Valdano, Maradona's teammate.

"I'll never forgive him. It's very hard to forgive and forget in the circumstances. I think I'm 4-1 to get a red card in the tunnel - it would be the fist of Terry Butcher rather than the hand," - former England defender Terry Butcher, speaking in 2008 when assistant coach of Scotland ahead of a reunion with Maradona.

"He was the greatest player I played against but the way, after the game, he never apologised or admitted to it was wrong." - England goalkeeper Peter Shilton.



Diego Maradona.

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Daily Echo

SAINTS SPOTLIGHT



High profile stars available on a free

Wenger gives frees to three midfielders

SOME high profile names have been given free transfers by Premier League clubs.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at who is available for nothing ...

Arsenal

Arsenal have released three experienced midfielders.

Tomas Rosicky was allowed to leave after a decade at The Emirates, but one hampered by injuries – he was restricted to 170 league appearances in his ten years with the Gunners.

Now 35, Rosicky joined Mikel Arteta, 34, and Mathieu Flamini, 32, on the free transfer list.

Arteta cost Arsene Wenger £10m from Everton in the summer of 2001, while Flamini returned to Arsenal from Milan three years ago.

AFC Bournemouth

Sylvain Distin was the highest profile departure at Dean Court when the Cherries announced their retained list.

The 38-year-old ex-Manchester City, Pompey and Everton centre half was brought in by Eddie Howe last summer to add some top flight nous to the newly promoted squad.

Distain appeared 12 times for Cherries.

Stephane Zubar's five year Bournemouth stay is almost over.

The defender had not played for the club since October 2012, but Cherries' promotion to the Premier League triggered a one-year contract extension.

Zubar returned to York on loan at the start of 2015/16 – he had enjoyed a loan spell there the previous term – but suffered a bad knee injury after only five games and hasn't played a competitive game since.

Elsewhere, striker Jayden Stockley ended the 2015/16 season with ten goals in 21 appearances for League 2 Exeter City.

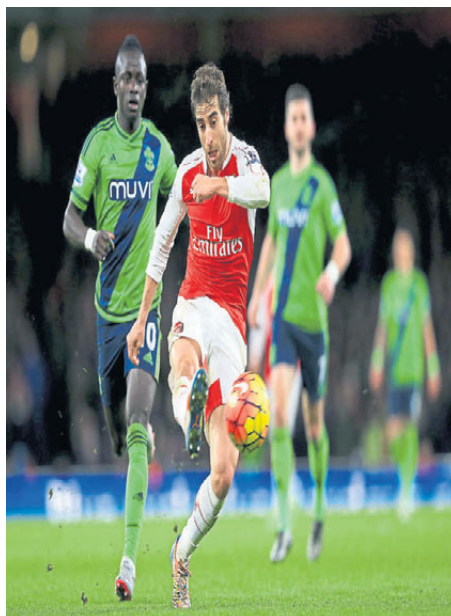
Though the Grecians were keen to sign him permanently, Stockley instead signed for Scottish Premier League club Aberdeen following his release by Cherries.

Other frees: Josh Carmichael, Jonathan Muleba, Josh Wakefield.

Aston Villa



Sylvain Distin, in action at St Mary's last season, has been released by Cherries.



Arsenal's Mathieu Flamini, left, and Tomas Rosicky, right, have both been released by Arsene Wenger.

Kieran Richardson – who won eight England caps in 2005-2006 – was the highest profile victim of Villa's desperate season.

The man who once cost Sunderland £5.5m, when they signed him

from Manchester United, has been given a free aged 31.

French midfielder Charles N'Zogbia, who cost Villa £9.5m when they signed him from Wigan in 2011, is also now a free agent after play-

ing just twice in his last season at Villa Park.

Other frees: Charlie Bannister, Janoi Donacien, Lewis Kinsella, Kodi Lyons-Foster, Ben Siegrist, Josh Webb.

Continued on page 30.

Ex-Saint Bale's the talk of twitter!

ENGLAND'S dramatic late win over Wales in Lens generated more than two million Tweets – making the Group B encounter the second most-discussed game of Euro 2016.

The Three Lions found themselves behind at half-time following a 35-yard free-kick from ex-Saints starlet Gareth Bale which swerved past goalkeeper Joe Hart.

However, England manager Roy Hodgson made positive substitutions to bring on Jamie Vardy, Daniel Sturridge and then Manchester United teenager Marcus Rashford to help turn the match around.

Leicester forward Vardy equalised within ten minutes before, as the clock ticked into stoppage time, Liverpool striker Sturridge stabbed in a winner.

That dudu sent social media into overdrive with some 39,000 Tweets per minute.

However, the most-talked about moment on the micro-blogging site during Thursday's game was when Bale's speculative long-range effort squirmed past Hart.

Brilliance?

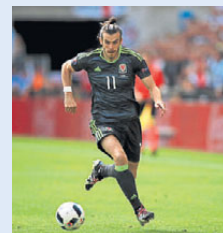
Around 52,000 Tweets per minute discussed if it was a moment of brilliance from the Real Madrid forward – the most expensive footballer in the world – or some sloppy handling by the Manchester City number one.

Vardy's equaliser generated 40,000 Tweets per minute, with the Leicester striker the most-talked about individual England player, ahead of Sturridge and Hart.

Bale, meanwhile, topped the Wales social chat, in front of captain Ashley Williams, who produced a brave defensive display, and then Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey.

The most-talked about game so far remains France's opening match of the championship against Romania on an emotional night in Saint-Denis.

The spectacular winner from West Ham's Dimitri Payet tops the most-discussed moments of the tournament on Twitter, ahead of Les Bleus' late show against Albania and Bale's free-kick going straight in at number three.



Twitter star Gareth Bale.

The big 2016 Wimbledon talking points

WHIP the cream and pour out the Pimm's - it's Wimbledon time once more.

The world's best players, minus the injured and no doubt much-missed Rafael Nadal, are preparing to head for SW19 to do battle on the lawns of the All England Club.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at the main talking points ahead of this year's championships which start on Monday week

CAN ANYONE BEAT NOVAK DJOKOVIC?

Of his last 42 grand slam matches, Djokovic has won 41. By winning his maiden French Open title earlier this month, Djokovic became the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to hold all four slam titles at the same time. He is more dominant than Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal at their peak and goes into Wimbledon looking for a third straight title. Stopping the Serbian will take some doing but Andy Murray and, more surprisingly, Jiri Vesely have shown this season that he can be beaten.

SERENA TRYING FOR 22 AGAIN

Serena Williams moved to within one of equalling Steffi Graf's Open era record of 22 grand slam singles titles



Novak Djokovic is aiming for his third straight SW19 title, by beating Garbine Muguruza in last year's Wimbledon final. It was her fourth slam trophy in a row and she was a huge favourite to complete the calendar Grand Slam and match Graf at the US Open. But pressure got the better of her as she lost to Roberta Vinci in the semi-finals and she has since lost successive slam finals to Angelique Kerber and Muguruza. She remains world number one but no longer holds the same fear factor for the other players. With her 35th birthday approaching, is time finally running out for the six-time Wimbledon champion?

GRASS SALVATION FOR ROGER FEDERER?

Like Williams, Federer has been defying the aging process for years but, having famously gone through his career remarkably free of injuries, it has all caught up with the Swiss this year. He was forced to have surgery for the first time in February after sustaining a knee injury running his daughters a bath and then missed the French Open because of back problems. It was the first grand slam not to feature the 34-year-old this millennium. Federer has returned to competition and there appears no danger of him missing Wimbledon. Cont on facing page

Big name players av

from page 29

Chelsea

Veteran goalkeeper Marco Amelia arrived at Stamford Bridge last October after leaving Milan.

His short term contract ended with him having not played a single minute for the Blues, and the 34-year-old is now a free agent again.

Other frees: Tika Musonda, Kevin Wright

Crystal Palace

Palace boss Alan Pardew released no fewer than 16 players.

Highest profile was Emmanuel Adebayor, who arrived on a six month contract from Tottenham in January.

The 32-year-old contributed just one goal in 12 league games and his appearance for Palace at St Mary's on the final day of the 2015/16 season could have been his last in England.

The Togo international arrived at Arsenal in January 2006 for £6m from Monaco, and cost Manchester City £25m when they signed him in the summer of 2009.

Striker Marouane Chamakh has also been released after scoring just two goals in the last two seasons for Palace.

Arsenal had brought him to England in 2010, after proving a regular scorer at Bordeaux. He only netted eight league goals in three years for the Gunners, though, and at 32 could struggle to find another English club.

Irish defender Paddy McCarthy, 33, was also given a free - no surprise, as he only appeared twice for Palace in his last three seasons at Selhurst Park!

Other frees: Reise Allassani, Andreas Breimyr, Andreas Malde, Connor Dymond, Spencer Forte, Matthew George, David Gregory, Brede Hangeland, Will Hoare, Chris Keltings, Adrian Mariappa, Oliver Pain, Chris Scales

EVERTON

Despite having no manager at the time of the retained list being made public, Everton have given free transfers to three crowd favourites.

Former England international Leon Osman was released after making over 300 league appearances for the Blues - 16 of them coming last season.

Osman made his senior international debut for England at the age of 31 in 2012, and won another cap in March 2013.

Tony Hibbert has made over 250 league appearances for the club, though he was restricted to just one sub appearances in 2015/16 - against Bournemouth in April.

Midfielder Steven Pienaar's second spell at Goodison Park is also over.

He first left to sign for Tottenham for £3m in 2009, but returned three years later for £4.5m.

He only made four sub appearances in the league last season.

Other frees: Aidan Graham, Felipe Rohde, Jindrich Stanek, Jordan Thorniley.



Emmanuel Adebayor, left, has been released by Crystal Palace.



Richard Wright pulls off a great save during his short loan spell at Saints.

LEICESTER

Former Saints skipper Dean Hammond is among the players given a free by Premier League champions Leicester.

The 33-year-old didn't play a single game of the Foxes' remarkable title-winning campaign - instead

having a long loan spell alongside former St Mary's boss Nigel Adkins at Sheffield United.

Hammond, who moved to Leicester in September 2013, had made 14 appearances for Leicester in 2014/15 prior to Nigel Pearson's departure.

The Foxes have also released one-time England international defender Paul Konchesky.

Like Hammond, he didn't make a single league appearance under Claudio Ranieri, instead spending the 2015/16 season on loan to QPR.

Now 35, the man who cost Liver-

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available on a free ...



Everton's Leon Osman, left, has been released.



Dean Hammond, left, has been released by Premier League champions Leicester.

pool £3m in 2010 won two senior England caps.

He made his debut against Australia in February 2003 - the same night that Saints striker James Beattie and Wayne Rooney were both handed their first senior caps as well.

Konchesky had to wait over two

years for his next cap - which came in November 2005.

Other frees: Kyle Bailey, Jack Barmby, Jacob Blyth, Aaron Hassall, Keenan King, Jonathan Maddison, Harrison Panayiotou, Mark Schwarzer, Max Smith-Varnam, Ryan Watson.

LIVERPOOL

Kolo Toure ended the 2015/16

season as one of Liverpool's first choice centre halves at the age of 35 - but has still been released.

Toure made his name in England with Arsenal before a £16m to Manchester City in 2009.

Full back Jose Enrique - a £5m arrival from Newcastle in 2011 - has also been released.

He was restricted to just three FA Cup outings in 2015/16 - two of which were against League 2 club Exeter.

Other frees: Tom Brewitt, Daniel Cleary, Will Marsh, Ryan McLaughlin, Alex O'Hanlon, Kristof Polgar, Samed Yesil.

MANCHESTER CITY

Ex-Saints goalkeeper Richard Wright's bizarre Manchester City is over after he was released.

The 38-year-old signed for City in the summer of 2012 but NEVER played a single first team game for the club.

Indeed, his last competitive outing was back in November 2011.

Having made his name at Ipswich Town, Wright was signed by Arsenal for £6m in 2001. He later moved to Everton before spending a loan spell at St Mary's (while at West Ham) towards the end of 2007/08.

Despite only playing a handful of games, he was still voted Saints' Away Player of the Year by travelling fans that season!

Other frees: Charlie Albinson, Martin Demichelis, Nathaniel Oseni, Sam Tattum.

MANCHESTER UNITED

Nick Powell was only 18 when Sir Alex Ferguson spent £4m to sign him from Crewe in the summer of 2012.

And Powell appeared to have a great future when he scored against Wigan on his Premier League debut in September of that year. Coming off the bench, Powell had only been on the pitch 10 minutes when he netted.

Yet he was to make only two other league sub appearances and, aged 22, has now been released. Unlike some of the other players who have been given a free this summer, though, he is sure to quickly find a new club and challenge.

Other frees: George Dorrington, Oliver Rathbone, Victor Valdes.

NEWCASTLE

Defender Steven Taylor, 30, was the only name on the Toon free transfer list after the club's relegation.

NORWICH

There were no well-known names on the Canaries released list.

Frees: Reiss Awuah, Afolabi Coker, Adel Gafaiti, Reece Hall-Johnson, Cameron King, Jamar Loza, Cameron Norman, Obasirinse Uade

SAINTS

There were no surprises in the St Mary's retained list.

Veteran goalkeeper Kelvin Davis's decade of great service ended with a free transfer at the age of 39.

Davis made over 300 appearances for Saints in his ten years at the club.

Expensive flop Gaston Ramirez was also given a free, after making only three league starts in his last three seasons of a four-year deal.

Continued on page 32

Wimbledon 2016: The big issues

from facing page

He has reached the final the last two years and, having won seven titles at the All England Club, is never a player who can be counted out.

BRITISH ARMY

The mass exit of British wild cards on the first and second day of the tournament is a bit of a standing joke - although, with a prize cheque of £30,000 for first-round losers, who is really laughing? However, this year seven players will be in the singles draw on ranking. Andy Murray will of course carry most of the expectation at his 11th championships but Johanna Konta is already a grand slam semi-finalist and Heather Watson almost beat Williams last year. Aljaz Bedene, Kyle Edmund, Dan Evans and Naomi Broady are all direct entrants and will hope to make headlines for the right reasons.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD?

Muguruza's French Open victory was heralded by Billie Jean King as the start of the changing of the guard in women's tennis. The 22-year-old overpowered Williams to become only the second player born in the 1990s - after Petra Kvitová - to win a slam title. Muguruza is the stand-out name but the



Andy Murray again carries the home hopes at Wimbledon.

likes of Belinda Bencic and Madison Keys are already known threats and watch out for teenagers Daria Kasatkina and Jelena Ostapenko. Among the men, 22-year-old Dominic Thiem is now a top-10 player following his run to the semi-finals of the French Open and there is at last a generation of truly exciting young talent led by Alexander Zverev, Borna Coric and Taylor Fritz.

Wimbledon by numbers

Top tennis tipples - what the crowds drink:
 :: 330,000 cups of tea and coffee
 :: 320,000 glasses of Pimm's
 :: 230,000 bottles of water
 :: 110,000 pints of draught beer and lager
 :: 29,000 bottles of champagne
 Wimbledon's strawberry bond:
 :: 140,000 portions of English strawberries are sold during the tournament
 :: £1.70 - price of a punnet in 1993
 :: £2.50 - price of a punnet in 2015
 :: 10,000 - the litres of cream that are poured over the fruit during the course of the championships
 :: 10 - minimum number of berries per punnet
 Serving up food fit for a champion diet - what the crowds eat each year:
 :: 110,000 sandwiches and baguettes
 :: 16,000 portions of fish and chips
 :: 30,000 stonebaked pizzas
 :: 86,000 ice cream portions
 :: 25,000 scones
 :: 5,000 kilos of bananas (for the players)

Sunderland release £19m strike pair on frees

from page 31

He had arrived from Serie A in the summer of 2012 as newly promoted Saints' record signing at over £12m.

But the creative Uruguayan rarely lived up to the hype and fell out of favour once Mauricio Pochettino and then Ronald Koeman arrived.

Spent a successful loan spell at Middlesbrough in 2015/16, and the promoted Teesiders could yet offer him a route to staying in the Premier League.

Other free: Will Britt

STOKE CITY

Peter Odemwingie's Premier League career is probably over after he was given a free by Stoke.

The striker turns 35 next month and failed to net in his eight

January 2013 having been a prolific marksman for Carlisle and Watford.

Unlike Fletcher, though, the goals dried up for him on Wearside. - he was to only score once in 37 league appearances for the Black Cats, and has now been released.

He ended the 2015/16 season with seven goals in an 18-game loan spell at Blackburn.

Former England defender Wes Brown, now 36, has also been released.

He won 23 caps between 1999-2010 during his time with Manchester United, prior to joining Sunderland for £1m in 2011.

Other frees: Liam Agnew, Stephen Harper, Mikael Mandron, Martin Smith.

SWANSEA

There were no high-profile names on the Swans' retained list.



Steven Fletcher, right, has been released by Sunderland.

games for the Potters in 2015/16 - instead ending the season on loan to Championship club Bristol City.

Having made his name in England with West Brom, after arriving from Lokomotiv Moscow in 2010, Odemwingie signed for Cardiff for £2m in the summer of 2013 - yet scored just once in 15 games before moving onto Stoke the following January.

Managed five goals in 27 league games for Stoke (11 of them off the bench).

Other frees: Ben Barber, Edward Dryden, Bobby Moseley, Ryan O'Reilly, Steven Sidwell, Petros Skapetis, Mason Watkins-Clark, Mason Bradley.

SUNDERLAND

Two strikers who cost £17m between them have left Sunderland for nothing.

Steven Fletcher cost £12m when he arrived from Wolves, and left after netting 23 times in 94 league outings (22 of them off the bench).

The Scottish international obviously knew he had no future under Sam Allardyce, having been loaned out to French club Marseille in February of this year.

Striker Danny Graham arrived at the Stadium of Light for £5m in

Frees: Daniel Alfei, Kyle Copp, James Demetriou, Stephen Fallon, Alex Gogic, Raheem Hanley, Henry Jones, Lee Lucas, Gareth Owen.

TOTTENHAM

Emmanuel Sonupe, a former England under-18 international who has never played a first team game for the club, is the only player released by Tottenham.

WATFORD

Frees: George Byers, Josh Doherty, Lars Ekstrand, Karl Ikpeazu, Jorell Johnson, Mahlando Martin, Bernard Mensah, Luke Thomas, Alfie Young.

WEST BROM

Defender Stephane Sessegnon, who once cost Sunderland £6m, made 31 appearances in 2015/16 before being released.

Other frees: Victor Anichebe, Samir Nabi.

WEST HAM

Frees: Jordan Brown, Leo Chambers, Elliot Lee, Nathan Mavila, Amos Nasha, Joseph O'Brien.

Vince should play

AFTER a disappointing debut Test series against Sri Lanka, James Vince will be hoping to show his class against Pakistan.

Do not bet against him doing just that, *writes Simon Walter.*

On the face of it, batting at five against Sri Lanka in three home Tests should have been the perfect introduction to cricket's high table.

It did not quite work out like that as Hampshire's captain finished the series with 54 runs at an average of 13.5

So it will be fascinating to see how he copes with the step up in class when England play Pakistan in July and August.

It will come as no surprise if Vince rises to the challenge.

Even if he has another poor series he should have the security of knowing he will still have a very good chance of touring India later this year.

Sure, his place will come under scrutiny if he has another run of low scores

But England head coach Trevor Bayliss is understood to be a big fan and Vince's ability against spin will give him a good chance of doing well on the sub-continent.

Despite his poor record, there were certainly positives from his debut Test series, most notably the quality of his driving and his 35 in the first innings of the second Test at Durham.

Having been caught at third slip for nine on debut at Headingley after getting a thick edge against the seam of Shaminda Eranga, Vince enjoyed a better time of it at Chester-le-Street.

A couple of deliciously driven fours against slow left-armers Milinda Siriwardana and Rangana Herath, his former Hampshire teammate, were an early indication of what he is capable of at the highest level (he had also driven beautifully a couple of times at Headingley).

But for Hampshire fans, it was a familiar sight as Vince, having done the hard work, was on his way for 35 (59 balls).

He was tempted by some extra flight from Siriwardana and caught very well at short cover after attempting to drive his fifth boundary.

The fact he at least had Test runs on the board provided hope ahead of Vince's first Lord's international, but he was dismissed cheaply in both innings by the seam-up of Nuwan Pradeep.

Difficulties in adjusting to the Lord's slope seemed to be a contributory factor as he was bowled on each occasion.

Vince did not have a very good record in the few games he had played at Lord's going into the third Test.

In his only other first-class appearance at the home of cricket - a nine-wicket County Championship defeat against Middlesex last season, he was bowled for 13 and 14 in both innings by James Harris.

When he made his other two Lord's appearances, against Middlesex in the Natwest T20 Blast last year and the 2012 CB40 final against Warwickshire, he was out for 14 and 18 respectively.



James Vince plays a textbook straight drive on his Test debut at Headingley (PA)

So he did not have much past experience to draw on.

The infamous Lord's slope (there is a drop of 2.5 metres from the north end of the ground to the south) did not seem to help his cause.

Batting at the Nursery End, where the slope brings the ball into the right-hander, he played inside the line of a Pradeep delivery that flicked off his

off bail in the first innings.

His second innings was over even more quickly.

Again the bowler was Pradeep, who had just trapped Joe Root lbw with a delivery from the Nursery End that came back down the hill.

Vince made the mistake of shouldering arms against another off-cutter that came down the slope, knocking

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ny against Pakistan



James Vince (left) looks back at his broken wickets after being bowled by Sri Lanka's Nuwan Pradeep (centre) during day one of the Investec Third Test match at Lord's. Simon Cooper/PA Wire



James Anderson celebrates with James Vince after dismissing Kusal Mendis on day 3 at Durham

out the 25 year-old's off stump first ball.

It was a horrible way to end what was already an under-par series.

A couple of dropped catches did not help.

Every Hampshire fan hopes that Vince goes on to emulate the likes of Kevin Pietersen and Robin

Smith, the county's last top-order England batsmen.

Comparisons with those two are a little harsh as they are such big acts to follow.

Vince's 54 runs at 13.5 have been compared to the South African-born pair's respective records in their first three Tests (Pietersen

made 233 runs at 46.6 and Smith 145 at 29).

Maybe, like them, Vince needs a better class of opposition to bring the best out of him.

KP and the Judge also began their Test careers in a home series while in their mid-twenties.

But they did so against consid-

erably better opposition than the current Sri Lankan side; Pietersen started against the 2005 Australians during that summer's epic series against the likes of Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath, while Smith made his bow against the 1988 West Indians – an attack including Malcolm Marshall et al.

Clearly Pakistan are not in the class of the 1988 West Indies or the 2005 Aussies but they are definite level up on Sri Lanka.

The left-arm pace of Wahab Riaz and Mohammad Amir should give England more problems than they have experienced so far this summer.

Vince may well thrive on that.

Like Pietersen and Smith, he is a big-game player and should have the confidence of knowing he is guaranteed a spot for the rest of the summer.

With Nick Compton likely to be dropped the first Test against Pakistan on July 14, England are unlikely to make more than one change to their top five.

Vince has even been touted as a possible No 3 so Jos Buttler can come back into the side.

But with Scott Borthwick likely to replace Nick Compton at first drop expect Vince to have the rest of the summer to make the No5 spot his own.

● Meanwhile, England's Chris Woakes has backed Vince to thrive at the highest level.

Woakes believes that he will cause some serious damage once he adapts to Test cricket.

"Vincey has scored a lot of runs in county cricket over the last couple of years, and proved that he is a very good player in both the red and white-ball game," said Woakes.

"He's been bigged up for so long to play international cricket, and now he's got his chance which is thoroughly deserved.

"Hopefully he can take to it well and score more runs. I know he probably didn't score as many runs as he'd have liked in his first Test series but sometimes it takes a bit of time to adapt to international cricket."

For England, attention now turns towards the Royal London One-Day Series against Sri Lanka, which gets underway with the first of five ODIs at Trent Bridge next Tuesday.

Vince has been named in the 14-man squad for those games, as well as the 12-man group for the T20 clash at the Rose Bowl on July 5.

Woakes added: "You need to be in form at the same time as adapting, but now he has a great opportunity in the one day series to show what he can do," added Woakes.

"When I've played against him in one-day cricket or T20s, it looks too easy and natural and he's a very difficult guy to bowl to.

"It would be great to see him bring that into the England side."

Chris Woakes was speaking at a Sri Lankan inspired cooking event hosted by Royal Lon-

Gayle storm?

HAMPSHIRE will be aiming to avoid another Chris Gayle storm when they play their next T20 match against Somerset at Taunton tomorrow (2pm).

Last season the West Indies superstar belted Hampshire's bowlers for eight sixes in a 49-ball 85 not out that helped Somerset to an eight-wicket win, with nine balls to spare.

It was the third and final innings of a brief first stint in the Natwest T20 Blast that followed scores of 92 against Essex at Chelmsford and a 62-ball 151 not out (in a losing cause) against Kent at Taunton.

Since returning to Somerset with a T20 Blast average of 328 (and a strike rate of 192.9), Gayle has not been quite so prolific.

After arriving embroiled in controversy following his infamous interview with a female Australian broadcaster at the Big Bash - and as a World T20 winner following the Windies extraordinary success in India - he was out for five on debut, a 48-run defeat against Sussex at Hove.

But in his two games at Taunton he was back to the sort of form he showed in the IPL final, when he made a 38-ball 76 for Royal Challengers Bangalore.

His 23-ball 49 against Essex a fortnight ago was the highest score of the match and he made it back-to-back



Chris Gayle is set to play against Hampshire at Taunton tomorrow

home wins with a 13-ball 31 against Surrey.

Gayle's latest Somerset stint ends after Hampshire's visit and, ominously for Giles White's side, he will not want to leave without making a fifty.

He may have done so in last night's derby against Gloucestershire at Bristol.

Whatever the outcome there, he will be determined to end on a high against a Hampshire attack including his Windies teammate Tino Best.

Best was due to play in Hampshire's derby against Sussex at The Ageas Bowl last night after impressing at the death in the Royal London One-Day Cup win at home to Surrey on Wednesday night.

So expect there to be fireworks.

With Marcus Trescothick taking a break from the shortest format, Gayle has been opening the batting with new Somerset T20 captain Jim Allenby.

Also in the Somerset side will be Sri Lanka legend Mahela Jayawardene and former Hampshire all-rounder Yasir Arafat.

Before last night's games, Somerset were in fifth place in the South Group, a point behind Gloucestershire, while Hampshire were bottom after their worst start to a T20 season since 2003.

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SOUTHERN Daily Echo



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LOCAL CRICKET



Tom Hockenhull's smashed car window.

Some smashing batting by big hitter Asad... but skipper wasn't too happy!

ONE of the gems from those wonderfully hilarious Billy Birmingham 12th Man spoof cricket tapes from Down Under was when a six-hit smashes a car front windscreen and provides the owner with a souvenir cricket ball on the back seat.

And it happened in real time to Fair Oak skipper Tom Hockenhull at Langley Manor last week.

Having played at the Manor's compact Knellers Lane ground before, Tom knew he needed to park his car in what he mistakenly believed was a safe spot behind the pavilion.

And safe it was – until big-hitting team-mate Asad Abbas arrived at the crease with Oaks chasing down the Manor's 315-7.

Abbas wasted little time in finding his range, launching a maximum over the pavilion – and straight through the rear side window of Tom's nearly brand new car .. the ball nestling perfectly on the back seat.

Fair Oak lost the match after making a commendable 269-run response – but that did little to cheer Tom up. At least he had some extra air conditioning in the car on his journey home.

And Tom's 9-5 weekday job is in car insurance!

● The Winchester & District CA's Tichborne Trophy quarter-finals on Monday evening (6.15) are set to clash with live terrestrial television screening of England's potentially vital Euro 2016 clash with Slovakia.

Fortunately, the four host clubs all have television sets in their clubhouse, which should appease the cricketers.

The T20 ties are: Bishops Waltham v Longparish, IBM Hursley v Fair Oak, Ropley v Sparsholt, Tichborne Park v Pothwarf Lions.

Parley out for victory

PARLEY need to cash in on an unexpected home ground advantage when they host former Lord's winners Goatacre in a rearranged Davidstow National Village Cup regional final at Christchurch Road, West Parley, tomorrow (1pm).

They were originally drawn away to the West of England Premier League Division 1 club in the Dorset/Wiltshire final, but when last Sunday's tie was washed out, competition rules meant a change of venue in Parley's favour.

Parley are unbeaten at the top of Hampshire League County Division 3 South, but play six rungs below Liam Dawson's Goatacre on the recreational cricket pyramid.

If Parley manage to avenge last season's county final defeat by Goatacre, they will visit either North Perrott or Timsbury in the initial national round on June 25.

Rowlage visit Frensham for their Surrey group final tomorrow, with a trip to Kent winners Linton Park awaiting the victors.

Hambledon are already through to the last 32 and will host past champions Shipton-Under-Wychwood, from Oxfordshire, at Ridge Meadow next Sunday.

The Dons edged out Tichborne Park by two runs in a county final thriller, with George Marshall cracking a superb 142.

Farewell to Hugh

LOCAL cricket has said its farewells to Hugh Crofton, an eccentric character who dedicated so much time to further the cause of generations of young cricketers in the New Forest area since the early 1950s. He was 79.

His well-attended funeral service was held in St Nicholas Church, Brockenhurst, yesterday.

Wagtails

Hugh ran the Forest Wagtails cricket team (latterly Robins CC) besides running his own XI for the benefit of young players – mainly in the school holidays.

After his Army national service, Hugh became a schoolmaster, teaching English and sport.

He had links with Brockenhurst and Burley and in his playing days was a wicketkeeper, noted for his large, old style wicket-keeping pads and vintage sports equipment which reflected his eccentric nature and manner.

HOOK SHOT OUT AFTER BREWERS FIGHT BACK

HOOK & Newnham Basics' challenge floundered once they allowed a promising situation against unbeaten County Division 1 leaders Alton to slip from their grasp.

They reduced the Brewers to 52-4, but were on the back foot once Richard Anthony (75) and Hugo Hammond (50) became established and yielded a 139-run stand which pointed Alton towards 227-6.

Hook were dismissed for 124 – Matt Buckingham (35) being rewarded with a Premier League call up today – with Lee Partner (3-11) and Tom Paul (3-51) sharing six of the wickets.

The result left Alton boasting the only unblemished CD1 record and a handy 13-point lead over Purbrook at the top, *writes Mike Vimpany*.

Rolled by Alton a week earlier, Purbrook put 300-8 on their electronic scoreboard against St Cross Symondians III, with Josh Spiers (69) and Brad Mengham (53) making half-centuries.

St Cross replied with 200-7, Roly Fowler (48) top scoring.

Portsmouth & Southsea responded to the previous week's defeat by Bishops Waltham by whipping Ropley by eight wickets.

South African Tim Niemand (57), fresh from his Ventnor century a week earlier, was the mainstay for Ropley, whose modest 175-9 proved easy pickings for Jack Davies (82 not out) and Matt Benfield (43 not out).

Lee Beck produced a star all-round performance as fast rising New Milton II inflicted a second consecutive defeat on Shrewton.

Beck top scored with 47 and then, with the Green & Golds defending 130 at Fernhill, shared the bowling spoils with Matt Freeman as Shrewton



Sunny Bhimsaria, who made 92 not out for Bishops Waltham

plunged to 64 all out. Freeman took 5-21 and Beck 5-43, while only Sam Gillot (20) got double figures.

Toby Corbin was arguably the man-of-the-match as his side Ventnor II toasted a long overdue success – in the shape of a four-wicket win over the early pacemakers United Services at Steephill.

Corbin bowled an immaculate 2-11 off ten overs, bagging US Aussie run machine Matt Rogers for a duck.

Only Tom May (46) and Matt Eas-

ton (46) got to grips with things as US managed only 192-8.

After Ben Clarke (23) and Tom Stafford (29) had provided a half-century start, Corbin made 43 and with support from Pierre Kriel (38) and Alex Horton (28) got Ventnor home after 28 overs.

Sunny Bhimsaria was promoted Bishops Waltham's match winner against Fareham & Crofton at Bath Lane, hitting an unbeaten 92 as his side chased down 181-7 to win by

eight wickets. He struck two sixes and 13 boundaries as Waltham, with support from Dom Quincey (20) and Mark Boriani (25 not out), coasted home.

Skipper Tom Kent (50) and Matt Gould (41) pointed youthful Fareham to 181-7 (Sam Medhurst 4-28).

No shortage of runs at Allotment Road, where Sarisbury's 280-7 (Colin Day 72) proved just beyond Totton & Eling II (264-9) for whom Wayne Lockyer hit 110.

LOCAL CRICKET

Ollie ton gives Totton & Eling a huge lift

ONE century doesn't make a summer, but there's no doubt the rapid-fire hundred that Ollie Perrin hit against Old Tauntonians & Romsey has given everyone at Totton & Eling an enormous lift.

The 17-year old peppered the Southern Gardens boundary with a blistering 129 not out which swept Totton to a first Premier Division 1 win.

Significantly, it took them off the bottom of the log, writes Mike Vimpany.

Perrin smashed seven sixes and 14 fours in a boundary blitz which saw Totton recover from an uncertain start and overhaul OT's 214 all out with ten overs to spare.

A BTEC Sport student at Clayesmore in rural Dorset (where Hampshire's Lewis McManus was educated), Perrin cut his teeth in junior

cricket with Portsmouth & Southsea and played for Hampshire U15s.

He plans to study at Oxford Brookes and is hoping Dorset selectors will have taken notice of his solo show against OTs.

Perrin (picture by James McMillan) wasn't the only match day 6 centurion: Wayne Lockyer got one in the sec-onds narrow County 1 defeat at Sarisbury Athletic.

Those two performances certainly put a smile on everyone's faces at T & E as the club rebuilds from yet player exodus.

Chairman Mark Mellett, who played his junior cricket with former Hampshire opener Tony Middleton, knows there's no quick fix.

"But we're headed in the right direction. Moral is excellent, with a real buzz about the place," he says.

"There's a refreshing young element to the club, colts everywhere and getting plenty of

cricket - when it doesn't rain."

Mellett, whose teenage boxer-son Jack plays for the first team, acknowledges Totton have to take a few steps back in order to go forward, but retaining status quo in terms of league standing would be an end-season bonus.

Remaining in a competitive Premier 1 and in a three-down County 1 environment won't be easy.

Recent scores and news that the club's young third team has won three of its four matches in HL Regional 1 South suggest things are moving in the right direction.

Totton have 'old hands' still at the club like James Taylor (like Perrin a potential match winner) and Richard Dib-den, who is skipping the two's.

They have also recruited 27-year old Zimbabwean Mark Mbofana, who plays in the same Mid-West Rhinos fran-chise team as Hursley Park's Boswell Chapungu.

Mbofana, who hit 75 against Sarisbury Athletic recently, is already fully embraced at Southern Gardens, working on the ground and coaching the legions of youngsters at the club.

There are plenty of green shoots emerging at Totton & Eling: they just need time to mature ...



CRUNCH MATCH FOR SARISBURY SQUAD

SARISBURY Athletic's bid to launch an immediate return to the top flight of local Southern Premier League cricket has reached a significant stage.

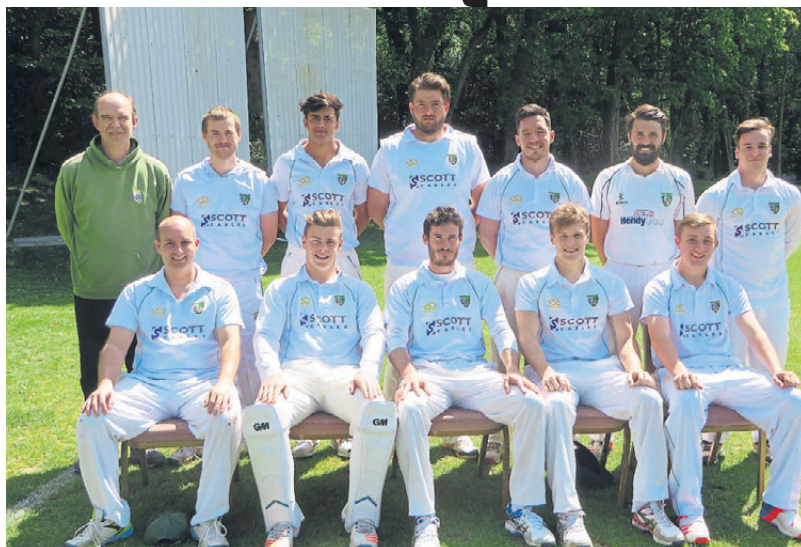
The outcome of today's visit of Portsmouth to Allotment Road will be a pointer to the route Matt Journeaux's side will take for the rest of the season.

It's a match they cannot afford to lose if, currently 23 points adrift, they are to keep in touch with an all-win Portsmouth side that has arguably surprised itself with its lofty status and by topping the table after six unbeaten weeks.

It's certainly been all change at Sarisbury, with Journeaux overseeing a substantial change in playing personnel since last season's one-off meal ticket to local cricket's top table.

Over half the Premier team left for pastures new after last summer's relegation, leaving Sarisbury to draw on the resources of their seconds, who are predictably struggling and winless in Hampshire League County Division 1.

The home dressing room has seen 19 different faces this season (five of them one-offs) and that's without the return of the evergreen Dan Goldstraw, who is hoping to clock up his 500th SPL wicket on his return today.



Sarisbury CC. Standing (from back): Keith Spicer (scorer), Chris Sanders, Basil Akram, Ryan Covey, Jack Lovett, Jason Allmark, Dan Clouting. Seated: Phil Jewell, Harry Hovey, Matt Journeaux, Sam Floyd, Josh Hill.

But the picture is far from gloomy at Sarisbury who, to their immense credit, are providing cricket for six teams every Saturday - and that's with Burridge and Locks Heath on their doorstep.

Journeaux is probably quite content with three wins from five SPL1 matches so far - that's a record three other sides share - though he'd like to start captaining a settled side.

The skipper himself has been absent on school teaching duties for the past fortnight, and key batting duo, Jack Lovett and Ricky Rawlins are currently supporting England across the Channel at Euro 2016.

Sarisbury have so far beaten Hook & Newnham Basics, Andover and Totton & Eling, with last week's defeat at Rowledge (when only half-century makers Dan Clouting and

the returning Shayne Freemantle made runs) their first since Mitchell Stokes man-handled their attack on May 7.

Today's meeting with Portsmouth and the upcoming jousts with Liphook & Ripplesley and Basingstoke & North Hants will define the course the summer will take.

Sarisbury, though, shouldn't be too disappointed with their progress so far.

England Test ratings for Sri Lanka series

ENGLAND were denied a series whitewash against Sri Lanka as rain wiped out most of the final day of the third Investec Test at Lord's, but it was still a successful three games.

Here, the Sports Pink analyses each player's performance over the course of the series.

ALASTAIR COOK

There may not have been a century in five innings, but the captain still averaged more than 70. For good measure, of course, England's leading runscore became the first from his country to pass 10,000 Test runs and youngest globally ever to do so. There is a growing sense too that, after his self-confessed 'wobbles' in the past, this is very much Cook's team. He is exemplary. 8

ALEX HALES

At last, at the eighth attempt spread over four years, it seems England may have found a lasting partner for the captain at the top of the order. Hales has re-stated his case admirably after his unconvincing maiden series in South Africa. He is still awaiting a first Test hundred, however, and will know it will not get any easier against Pakistan. 8

NICK COMPTON

England's biggest problem is now at number three. It is highly likely Compton's opportunity will not be extended, after his 51 runs in five innings. Joe Root does not yet seem to relish any move from number four, so the selectors have some thinking to do. To Compton's credit, the mutterings about intensity have waned and been replaced by glowing reports of his improved deportment. 2

JOE ROOT

A quiet series by the standards of England's often most reliable batsman. On the one occasion Root did get in, at Chester-le-Street, he also got out - with a hundred for the taking - and was hopping mad with himself for doing so. He has caught well in the slips. 4

JAMES VINCE

He only got started once too, in his first Test series, and like Root gave it away in Durham. Lord's proved all too much, the slope apparently playing its part as he was twice bowled. The Hampshire skipper is renowned in the slips, but has not yet got a foothold there either. 3

BEN STOKES

England's all-action X-factor player was out of the equation with his knee injury, after chipping a tame catch to mid-on and taking an early

wicket at Headingley. He appears to be recovering well from surgery, and should be back against Pakistan. 4

JONNY BAIRSTOW

Man-of-the-series for his brilliant and vastly-improved batting. Until he played across one in the second innings at Lord's, Bairstow had barely put a foot wrong and piled up 387 runs at 129. He also took the small matter of 19 catches in a series full of chances, thanks largely to James Anderson's expertise. As ever, the focus was also on the handful he dropped - the lot of any wicketkeeper, but evidence enough nonetheless that Bairstow still has work to do behind the stumps. 8

MOEEN ALI

Another all-rounder with a mixed record. Moeen's gung-ho innings at Chester-le-Street was a career-best triumph - but as a frontline spinner, he does not always convince either as an attacking option or when needed in a holding role. Two wickets at 90 does not read well, in conditions at times which ought to have suited. 4

STUART BROAD

In a series which did not contain a 'Broad special' spell, he had to play second fiddle to Anderson. He did not let England down, though. 6

STEVEN FINN

Like Broad, Finn chipped in - but more so than Broad, he was nowhere near his best. England know how good Finn can be when he gets it right, but his ups and downs continue. 5

JAMES ANDERSON

Pipped to man-of-the-series by Bairstow, Anderson arguably put in the most complete performance. He was irresistible at Headingley, in conditions made for him at a ground where he had never previously excelled; then he was resourceful and no less skilful in the second and third Tests, finishing with 21 wickets at less than 11 runs each. England's all-time leading wicket-taker has gone to the top of the world rankings for the first time. His pre-eminence is deserved. 9

CHRIS WOAKES

England will want Stokes back soon, but the upside has been a breakthrough series for his replacement. Career-bests with ball and then bat demonstrated Woakes is up to this level. At home especially, he must have a chance of getting in ahead of Finn on current form - and as a batsman, pushed down again when Stokes returns, he must be among the best ever Test number nines. 7

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College sport spotlight



Ichen's golf team.

Awards success

ITCHEN Sixth Form College's sports students have celebrated one of their most successful years ever at the Academy of Sport Awards Evening, which included three prestigious national titles.

Two of the college's teams have enjoyed high profile national successes this year, and there were five teams in the running for the coveted 'Team of the Year' award.

The women's football team again dominated the Hampshire Colleges' competitions, winning a clean sweep of all three trophies.

But the ultimate goal for this year's team was to achieve a third consecutive AoC national title achieved in early May when they won the English Colleges' Cup by beating Hull-based Wyke College 5-4.

Still, the women footballers were beaten into second place in the 'Team of the Year Award' by the college's men's basketball team, who lifted the AoC national Elite Cup for the first time ever.

Itchen beat Myerscough (Manchester) in the final in the Nottingham Wildcats Arena with a 77-67 scoreline.

The win was particularly sweet for the Itchen boys since Myerscough had pipped them in the EABL Final Four competition earlier in the season.

Individual performances were also recognised, with cross-country star Mahamed Mahamed winning the overall 'Players' Player Award'. Mahamed retained his national AoC Cross Country title in Newcastle in April.

Golf is a recent but incredibly successful addition to the Itchen Academy of Sport. Lawrence Cherry, who had finished in the top three of all major national events in the year, claimed the 'Elite Performer Award' for his individual achievements.

The 'Breakthrough Team of the Year Award' went to the Mixed Hockey team. Liam Eastwood and Fare-



Ichen basketball team, above. Chloe Lammas (above right) and Itchen's successful girls football team (below).



ham's Tom Larcombe played for the represented English Colleges during the year, and the team won the Hampshire Colleges' Under 19 League.

The most prestigious award, the 'Academy Performer of the Year Award' was awarded to basketball player Chloe Lammas, who was a

key member of the women's team which retained the Hampshire Cup and were runners up in the national cup.

THE RACING WEEK

Monday: Low-key fare for the start of the week with Windsor staging an ever-popular evening meeting, while Chepstow and Wolverhampton also race on the level, with Southwell flying the flag for the jumps.

Tuesday: More distinctly average racing to bet on from the varying ends of the country with Brighton likely to attract something of a holiday crowd, while Beverley usually has a good turnout for a meeting like this. Leicester and Newton Abbot ensure the fun continues throughout the evening.

Wednesday: Carlisle enjoys its biggest day of the year with the bookies.com Carlisle Bell and the totepool Cumberland Plate the key events of the day. The Bell was first contested in 1599 and the name relates to the bells which were awarded to the winners of the race in the reign of Elizabeth I. The bells, which are reputed to be the oldest prizes in racing, are kept at the Carlisle Guildhall Museum so if you like a bit of history, you could perhaps take a peak before racing begins.

Thursday: Newcastle kick off the three-day Northumberland Plate meeting and the fixture is sure to attract plenty of attention as it is staged for the first time on the new Tapeta track. Opening action is merely so-so but provides an amuse-bouche for the main events.

Friday: The racing moves up a notch at Newcastle, with the Belford Gosforth Park Cup and the Belford TV/EBF Stallions Hoppings Stakes providing the dual highlights. The Hoppings was won by future Irish Oaks and Prix de l'Opera victor Covert Love last year so perhaps make a handy note of this year's triumphant filly for further reference.

Saturday: Harzand is set to face off against the Investec Derby also-rans as the Dubai Duty Free Irish Derby takes place at the Curragh. Dermot Weld's Epsom hero is a likely favourite but he could clash again with US Army Ranger, Idaho and Wing Of Desire, who finished second, third and fourth respectively earlier this month. The Gain Railway Stakes provides admirable support. On British shores, a Derby of a different kind takes place for the first time on the all-weather at Newcastle, The John Smith's Northumberland Plate, aka the Pitmen's Derby, is always a competitive heat and it will be fascinating to see how the change in surface affects the field.

Sunday: Day three of a Classic weekend at the Curragh is highlighted by the Sea The Stars Pretty Polly Stakes, which features the likes of Oaks heroine Minding at this stage. The At The Races Curragh Cup and Grangecon Stud Balanchine Stakes also take place with good prize-money up for grabs in these prestigious Group races.

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